CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE AS A LITERARY CRITIC

By

WILLIAM GARRETT

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....ii

INTRODUCTION.....1

Chapter

I. CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.....9

II. MAGAZINES IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY.....33

III. CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE AND THE ATHENAEUM.....51

IV. DILKE'S PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONTEMPORARIES.....73

V. DILKE ON EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP.....101

VI. DILKE IN HIS AGE.....154

CONCLUSION.....194

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....201

INTRODUCTION

Nineteenth century literary critics are today generally respected for their all-inclusive interests in the various arts. John Ruskin wrote of literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, and music and enjoyed some acclaim as an authority in each. No less admired is Matthew Arnold, who, though he concentrated on one art instead of contemplating all, proved his acute familiarity with the whole range of English literature in discussing the functions of criticism in his time. The age was one of versatility, in which breadth of interests was not confined to the illustrious alone. From time to time some unknown person, perhaps honored in his own day but forgotten in ours, can justly be a claimant for literary recognition. This study frankly projects as its paramount purpose a restitution in the stature of Charles Wentworth Dilke II, a literary critic of the nineteenth century. His wide range of interests proves him to be no exception to his age. His catholic tastes fitted him for intense study in practically every phase of English and classical literature.

Though the name Charles Wentworth Dilke[1] is known only to a few specialists in the eighteenth and nineteenth

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[1]Hereinafter referred to as Dilke.

centuries, he merits recognition for various reasons, the first of which is the establishment of the Athenaeum, a literary journal for which he was sixteen years editor. Dilke for the first time in the history of literary periodicals proved that complete impartiality from all influences was possible. His untiring efforts and courage in vociferously condemning the unsavory practices of contemporary booksellers and editors should merit the perpetuation of his name.

But Dilke is most often remembered in connection with his friendship and intimacy with some of the most illustrious literary figures of his time. He was one of the three or four of Keats' closest friends. His connections with the London Magazine and later the Athenaeum resulted in almost daily intercourse with such famous men as Hunt, Lamb, Cunningham, Hood, Thackeray, and the Brownings. He worked side by side with Charles Dickens in a variety of projects for a good part of a lifetime.

Yet, not from reflected glory is Dilke most deserving of honors; in his own right, he was a critic of the first rank. His familiarity and insight into the Elizabethan age, the Age of Dryden, the eighteenth century, and his own are amply evidenced in various articles and volumes he produced over a period of a half-century. This thesis attempts to evaluate Dilke's contribution to the literary

milieu of his age, especially his activities as a critic, and to measure the extent of his influence upon his contemporaries.

It is not intended in this study to consider the entire body of criticism that Dilke published. While it is felt that a sufficient quantity of criticism known to be his is examined in this thesis, two types of limitations prevent a definitive treatment. The first limitation is the inaccessibility of letters and other papers in the British Museum, the Dilke Papers, Addenda 43,910-43,913. However, Professor Leslie A. Marchand, who has examined these papers in the preparation of his book The Athenaeum: A Mirror of Victorian Culture (1941) testifies that criticism contained in the Dilke Papers is inconsequential in both quantity and quality.

A second limitation imposed on this study is the lack of information on the location of various of Dilke's articles scattered throughout periodicals in the early nineteenth century. In his early period Dilke is said to have contributed many such articles of a critical nature to numerous literary journals. Because he rarely signed his name to any of these articles, their authorship must be established from internal evidence. A number of contributions appears to be written by him in the London Magazine and in the Retrospective Review, both of which have been

carefully examined in the Library of Congress for the background material of Chapter II. Proof of Dilke's authorship is in most cases unfortunately lacking. Where evidence as to their authorship is merely inferential, these suspect articles have been rejected for this study.

Various types of external and internal evidence serve in some instances to establish Dilke's authorship beyond doubt. Unquestionably, the greatest aid in the identification of his hand in the Athenaeum articles is Marchand's list in Dilke's handwriting of the contributors to the Athenaeum during the period when he was editor. These notes, hereinafter referred to as the Marked File, which Professor Marchand has generously placed at my disposal, establish almost beyond question the editor's contributions to his own journal. Sir Charles Dilke IV, grandson of this critic, demonstrates in his two-volume edition of eighteenth century criticism by Dilke that he often employed a unique signature which is easily identified--the initials of the title of the article. If the title were lacking, he signed the contribution with the initials of the first three words. Thus, if the title of the article was "Macleane not Junius," the signature was M. N. J. A third means of identification of Dilke's contributions is afforded in various types of internal evidence. A review of Milnes' Life of Keats (1848) is admitted as Dilke's because it contains many phrases and

some entire sentences found in Dilke's annotated copy of Milnes' Life, which fortunately was available for examination in the J. Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. Chapter VI of this study assumes an article on Heywood from the Retrospective Review, March, 1825, to be his for its unique form, which is exactly like that in the Continuation of Dodsley's Old English Plays, known to have been edited by Dilke. This assumption is supported by his grandson's authority; only one of the three articles for that month is about subjects befitting a literary critic. Finally, mere testimony in friends' letters without other supporting evidence has not in itself been admitted as sufficient grounds for identification. Distinguishing stylistic qualities have been of assistance in furnishing such supporting evidence: his frequent use of the ejaculation "why"; his penchant for quoting Shakespeare in the course of the article; his love for understatement; his repeated questions of "what are the facts?" But most suggestive of his authorship is his frequent practice of using the same statement--with a significant difference--at the beginning and end of his articles.

Except for the memoir by his grandson in the two-volume selection of Dilke's eighteenth century studies, The Papers of a Critic (1875), the only other extended comment about Dilke is Marchand's The Athenaeum: a Mirror of

Victorian Culture (1941), wherein Marchand demonstrates this critic's untiring and ultimately successful efforts to establish the Athenaeum as a thoroughly impartial and independent magazine. Gwynn and Tuckwell's Life of Sir Charles Dilke (1917) discusses Dilke's life and devotion to the education of his grandson. The Dictionary of National Biography contains an article on Dilke by Norman MacColl, though the grandson's memoir is largely MacColl's authority. Brief mention is given to Dilke in such works as Forman's edition of the Letters of Keats (1956) and in Rollins' edition of the Keats Circle (1948). His intimacy with Keats is noticed by Colvin, Lowell, and all subsequent biographers of Keats. So far as is known, no comment on Dilke's literary criticism has been published, and no extended account of his life has been written since the short sketch by his grandson in 1875.

The basic primary source materials for this study, therefore, are, in order of their importance, the Papers of a Critic; the six-volume Continuation of Dodsley's Old English Plays (1814-6), edited and prefixed by introductions by Dilke; articles in the Athenaeum and in the Retrospective Review; Leslie A. Marchand's unpublished notes on the Marked File of the Athenaeum; Dilke's annotated copy of Milnes' Life of Keats (1848); Rollins' edition of the letters of the Keats Circle (1948); and Dilke's unpublished letters in the Hampstead Library in England, now on microfilm in the Houghton Library at Harvard.

The main body of this study has been divided into six chapters. Chapter I presents Dilke's background, his forbears and descendants, a brief review of his publishing career, his paramount interests, his politics, religion, philosophy of life, and personality. Chapter II is an inquiry into the status of periodicals just prior to Dilke's term of editorship. Here are noted certain special interests and unethical procedures practiced by proprietors of magazines and booksellers in the nineteenth century when Dilke came upon the journalistic scene. Chapter III contains an analysis of various measures taken by Dilke in his efforts to combat the unwholesome influences pointed out in the previous chapter and, in addition, notes his success in overcoming other difficulties peculiar to his own career as editor. Chapter IV reviews the history of Dilke's relationships with his contemporaries--Keats, Hood, Lamb, Cunningham, Dickens, and others--and suggests the degree of influence he exercised over these writers.

Chapter V illustrates his insistence that factual detail be the paramount consideration in biographical scholship by reference to his articles in the Athenaeum and Notes and Queries on eighteenth century studies. Chapter V also notes the value of his biographical criticism by comparing it with that of other critics in his own and of the present day.

Chapter VI attempts to measure Dilke's stature as a critic by comparing his views, prejudices, and methods of criticism with those of other contemporaries. After noting likenesses and differences, this chapter indicates Dilke's contribution to the Romantic age and mentions his influence over certain contemporaries. The conclusion of this study reviews his career, influence, critical method, critical preferences, and suggests his degree of success and rank as a literary critic.

CHAPTER I

CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE

Charles Wentworth Dilke, the second in a long line of Charles Wentworth Dilkes, was praised by many friends and censured by a few enemies during his long career of nearly sixty years in public life. Almost every important literary figure of his time, as well as many lesser personages, had something to say about him. His influential position as owner and editor for sixteen years of England's largest weekly literary periodical, the Athenaeum, caused him to be respected by most of the important men of the day, and the many letters and opinions of his contemporaries attest his unique character, his forthright principles, and his varied accomplishments.

Charles Wentworth Dilke II came of an upper middle-class family that dated back to the Civil Wars in the fifteenth century. His forbear, Fisher Dilke, who married into a Wentworth family distinguished for their connections with Cromwell's Council of State, inherited property through his wife on the condition that the heirs should assume the name of Wentworth. His descendants, in keeping with this pledge, were known through succeeding generations as the Wentworth Dilkes or Dilke Wentworths until the end of the seventeenth

century.

During the reign of George II a Wentworth Dilke was clerk to the Board of Green Cloth at Kew Palace. To this Dilke was born an only son, Wentworth Dilke Wentworth, secretary to the Earl of Litchfield. He in turn left an only son, Charles Wentworth Dilke, a clerk in the Admiralty, who became the first of five in succession to bear that name. A friend of the Dickens family, Charles Wentworth Dilke I married in 1783 Sarah Blewford and had two sons, Charles Wentworth II (1789-1864) and William (1796-1885) and one daughter. This daughter later married John Snook, at whose home Keats spent his last night in England.

The second Charles Wentworth Dilke had one son, Charles Wentworth Dilke III, upon whom it is believed he probably bestowed too much attention. Though not an intellectual, this son became an eminent man. He was extremely royalist, was a good friend of the Prince Consort, and came to be regarded in Europe as an authority on horticulture and truck-gardening. He was one of the main promoters of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and of another Exhibition a decade later, for which service Queen Victoria bestowed upon him a baronetcy, which he accepted against his father's advice. He died in 1869, leaving two sons, Charles Wentworth Dilke IV and Ashton Wentworth Dilke (1850-83). This fourth Charles Wentworth Dilke, generally called Sir Charles Dilke, 2nd Baronet, edited the Papers of a Critic, a two-volume

selection of his grandfather's writings on the eighteenth century. He was a prominent radical politician and extensive traveler in France, Italy, Russia, the United States, and was the author of several books. He had an only son, Charles Wentworth V, third baronet, who was a civil servant, and died without leaving any lineal descendants.

Dilke was self-educated. Early in life he accepted a position in the Navy Pay Office, a position which his father before him had held and which Dilke continued to hold until the office was abolished in 1836. This unpretentious occupation, though not very remunerative, afforded Dilke ample time for extensive reading and literary research. Before he was nineteen he married Maria Dover Walker, who was noted for her gaiety, beauty, and gentle disposition. Sir Charles Dilke, her grandson, after her death in 1850, reports that she and Dilke "lived in the most complete happiness for more than forty years."[1]

Dilke began his extended publishing career by editing in 1814-15 a Continuation of Dodsley's Old English Plays, in which he intended to present not especially the best works of particular writers in the Elizabethan period, but rather to make public the best plays that were not generally available in print. In the opinion of most readers the critical

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[1]Dilke, Papers of a Critic, ed. Sir Charles Dilke, 2 Vols. (London, 1875), I, p. 72.

judgment he exercised in the editing of the Continuation of Dodsley's Old English Plays[2] was painstaking, accurate, and just. The result was that Gifford, editor of the Quarterly Magazine, spoke highly of him, an endorsement which helped Dilke to achieve early recognition as an acute critic. This reputation was made yet more substantial as a result of Dilke's many contributions to various magazines from 1814 to 1830. In January, 1818, Dilke succeeded John Keats as theatrical reviewer for the Champion Magazine, though Dilke did not remain in this position for more than two or three months.

Either as editor or as contributor, Dilke had publishing relationships with numerous periodicals of his time. Sir Charles Dilke details in his "Memoir" in the Papers of a Critic some of Dilke's contributions to various journals. A political pamphlet in the form of a letter to Lord John Russell, published separately in 1821, appears to have attracted much attention for its radical overtones. In 1822, in addition to Dilke's contributing to the London Review and Colburn's New Monthly, Charles Brown confidently asserts that some of Dilke's articles were republished in the Parisian Literary Gazette, edited by Galignani.[3] Sir Charles Dilke

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[2]Hereinafter referred to as Continuation.

[3]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 15; no periodical by that name is apparently in existence now, and a thorough investigation in the Library of Congress and in the British Museum fails to reveal any trace that such a periodical ever existed. Galignani was in 1822 editor of The Paris Monthly Review of

erroneously records that in 1823 Dilke wrote in the London Magazine as "Thurusa."[4] Other contributions appeared in Colburn's New Monthly, November, 1823, and in the Retrospective Review, March, 1825. From 1823 to 1825, he was one of the coterie writing for the London Magazine, along with Lamb, Hood, Reynolds, Hazlitt, Poole, Talfourd, Barry Cornwall, Allan Cunningham, De Quincey, George Darley, Hartley Coleridge, and others. Dilke is best remembered, however, for his articles in the Retrospective Review, which was concerned only with authors before 1800, and for his political articles in the Westminster Review, which claimed to no great literary pretensions but was a propaganda device for the Benthamites.

In 1826 Dilke went to the continent with his son, whom he left in Charles Brown's care, and visited Keats's tomb. He continued until 1830 to write for various magazines, particularly the New Monthly Magazine. In that year he gained sole control and three-fourths ownership of the Athenaeum. With cool-headed, deliberate judgment, with fierce honesty, with daring and precarious juggling of prices,

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British and Continental Literature, continued in 1823 as Galignani's Magazine and Paris Monthly Review. These holdings in the British Museum were destroyed during World War II.

[4]Ibid.; from 1820-30, no articles are signed by that name; "Theisitis" and "Thurma," however, do appear, and Sir Charles' memory may have been faulty here.

and undoubtedly, with some pure luck, Dilke succeeded gradually in establishing this journal not only on a paying basis, but also as the leading magazine of its type. During this time he wrote comparatively little, yet he contributed more than Sir Charles Dilke and others give him credit for writing. Leslie A. Marchand's notes of the Marked File of the Athenaeum[5] point out at least twenty-five articles of Dilke's, not to mention those unsigned articles appearing almost weekly. Most of these are of no great literary value except insofar as they illustrate a method of reviewing.

In 1846 Dilke resigned editorship of the Athenaeum to become manager, without salary, of the Daily News, which was at that time in a precarious financial position. Sir Charles Dilke records that the newspaper was only three months old when Dilke was first called in as "consulting physician." The purpose in securing Dilke for the position was to establish the newspaper on a sound financial basis. In a short time he was vested with absolute power in all business matters. He was second in command, with the right to discharge any of the staff except his chief editor and friend, John Forster. Using the same strategy he had employed in increasing the circulation of the Athenaeum, Dilke immediately lowered the price of the paper to one-half its original

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[5]Collected by Professor Marchand for research on the Athenaeum: A Mirror of Victorian Culture (Chapel Hill, 1941) from the office of the New Statesman and Nation.

cost and gained 18,000 new readers. His announced plan was to establish "a daily newspaper which shall look for support, not to comparatively few readers at a high price, but to many at a low price."[6] Even so, the newspaper did not fare well financially. Dilke, after all, was not editor, and the powers he did have were limited to financial matters. In effect, it appears that the wishes and political affiliations of many proprietors were at cross-purposes, so that it was difficult for the editors--at first Forster and then Dickens --to maintain harmony and satisfy everyone, a condition that militated against the newspaper's chances for solvency. Naturally, Dilke's position of rendering substantially remunerative the conflicting propositions of various proprietors proved even more difficult. He had signed an agreement to serve as manager for three years, and at the end of his term in the spring of 1849 he submitted his resignation. The following letter "in the name of the staff," showing an esteem for him as a man and as a superior, was sent to Dilke:

> I am sure there is not an individual connected with the Daily News--who knows its true interests--who will not look on this day as the blackest in its calendar, for today, I am told, you finally retire from the management of the paper. . . . Without your energy and consummate skill, the Daily News would have died a few months after its birth.
>
> Judging from expressions which I have heard since your intention to retire became known, I am certain that from the sub-editors down to the smallest boy, there is not one in the office that has had direct communication

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[6]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 62.

> with you, who does not look upon your loss as a personal misfortune. There has been such perfect reliance in the justice of even your censures, that I never yet heard a man say he was aggrieved by the severest of them, and when you found room for praise and gave it, the recipient felt he had something to be proud of.[7]

Although Dilke did not meet with such financial success in this venture as he did with the Athenaeum, he was in some measure rewarded for his efforts, since the newspaper had attained greater solvency when he left it than when he assumed managership.

This resignation marked Dilke's retirement from public life. His remaining fourteen years were devoted to literary research and to the education of his grandson. In 1850, when Maria died, Dilke toured Scotland and Ireland (1851-1852), during which time he "corresponded incessantly with his daughter-in-law, to whom he was much attached."[8] His grandson reports that in nearly all these letters Dilke showed himself to be, like all old radicals, a violent Tory in everything but pure politics. He rails against the cities of Manchester and Leeds, probably because of their railroads and manufacturers, and defends Bristol because "it has a human heart in it." Sir Charles explains that Dilke's liking for Bristol was largely attributable to his fondness for the old book shops he found there.[9] He returned in 1852 to live

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[7] Ibid., pp. 69-70.

[8] Ibid., p. 75.

[9] Ibid.

with his son, to whom he assigned most of his property.

At this period in his life Dilke had, aside from literary research, two paramount interests: the education and rearing of children--applied in a practical manner to his son and later his grandson--and the mismanagement of the Literary Fund, a foundation organized to aid literary figures in financial need. In the opinion of Dilke's friends, his strong sense of the family bond caused him to worry too much about his son Wentworth's progress in school. In a letter to his brother George, Keats writes concerning Dilke's unusual interest in his son:

> Dilke has continually in his mouth "My Boy!" . . . One would think Dilke ought to be quiet and happy--but no--this one Boy makes his face pale, his society silent and his vigilence jealous.[10]

Perhaps Keats was justified in censuring Dilke on this matter. But Dilke realized and perhaps excused, as Maria did, his overemphasized interest in his son's welfare. In a long letter to Wentworth in Italy he writes:

> I ought to be in bed, but somehow you are always first in my thoughts and last, and I prefer five minutes of gossiping with you. . . . How, indeed, could it be otherwise than that you should be first and last in my thoughts, who for so many years have occupied all my thoughts. For fifteen years at least it has been my pleasure to watch over you, to direct and to advise. Now, direct and personal interference has ceased. . . . It is natural, perhaps, that I should take a greater interest than other fathers, for I have a greater interest at stake. I have but one son.[11]

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[10]Letters of John Keats, ed. B. Forman (London and New York, 1952), p. 364.

[11]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 18.

As to the education of children, Dilke sets forth his theory and offers advice in a letter to Wentworth, after the manner of Lord Chesterfield, but with infinitely more of affection and tenderness and probably with considerably less expectation that it would someday be examined in the cold light of research:

> I like your purchases, and envy you the pleasure of reading the Letters of the Younger Pliny. You seem to have something of your father and of your grandfather in you, and to love books; but do not mistake buying them for reading them, a very common error with half the world. If you have, as I hope, bought Terence, and Plautus, and Valerius Maximus, and the others, because you intend to read them, and if you do read them in defiance of the little difficulties you will at first meet with, you will very soon be of my mind; there will no longer be much occasion for me to think for you, or to advise you; the thing desired will be accomplished. Once feel the pleasure of learning, or rather of knowledge, and I cannot conceive a man ever forsaking it.[12]

Dilke offers his son advice about books and how to use them. Perhaps he had in mind Bacon's famous essay on this subject; the terse, brief, and to-the-point style indicates as much:

> If you buy what you do not intend to read, your library is no better than a curiosity-shop. A library is nothing unless the owner be a living catalogue to it. I do not mean that you ought not to buy what you cannot immediately read, or read through; some books are to be skimmed, others are for reference, others are to be read, though not at that time.[13]

Then Dilke advises his son concerning the importance of Latin and Greek, advice which is consistent with his interest in

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[12] Ibid., p. 21.

[13] Ibid.

the classics. While he does not expect nor desire his son to be a great Latin or Greek scholar, he does wish him to know and understand Latin as well as English. His reason for stipulating such a mastery of these languages is that such proficiency is the best and most direct means to acquiring general knowledge. Though Dilke considered a knowledge of the classic Latin and Greek writers necessary to the education of children, these interests must not be so all-engrossing that factual, practical knowledge is neglected.

> I should recommend you to run over Virgil's Bucolics. In Italy you will find the very scenes. After such reading, a walk will illustrate Virgil, and Virgil explain a walk. Keep your mind always awake to what is going on about you--to the habits of people, especially the country people. Get into talk with them, observing their manner of cultivation, the rotation of crops, the price of land, both for purchase and rental. This is knowledge, and knowledge gained by merely opening your ears and your eyes. It costs no time, no labour, no money.[14]

In addition to Dilke's interest in the education of children, he held some definite convictions concerning child psychology. When his grandson was about eight, Dilke wrote Mary, his daughter-in-law, a long and interesting letter on the subject of rearing children. He begins by a kind of analysis of thought and behavior suggestively modern in its attitude but replete with understanding and sympathy:

> The subject is to me one of the deepest interest and ever has been. . . .Children live wholly in the present.

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[14] Ibid.

> The past is with them clean gone, and the future unknown and undreamt of. You may easily make them actors, and it is thought a fine thing when they are actors. You may even make them artful, cunning, hypocritical, but you cannot alter their nature. They are still children. You may make them miserable for a moment by bringing the past or the future before them as if it were the present, but leave nature play for an hour and they are living only in the present again. You cannot trifle with this part of child-nature without fearful mischief to the moral future.[15]

The child's awareness only of the present, Dilke seems to imply, is responsible mainly for misbehavior. He suggests, moreover, that it is useless to attempt to instill in children at this age a sense of the future or past. This kind of knowledge must come with time, and correction must be administered accordingly:

> They are not corrected at all by external force. The fault remains, with hypocrisy superadded,--cunning to conceal. The only true correction is self-correction, and this must be consequent on increased knowledge and enlarged sympathy and feeling. It is well to direct a child's attention to a bad habit and to help him correct it; but only to one error or habit at a time. To attack all is to keep up a worry, in which all the authority derived from affection is lost.[16]

The predominant ideas in Dilke's scheme of child psychology, then, appear to be sympathy and knowledge. From these the parent gains parental respect, but he must not abuse that respect for authority by being too critical: "only . . . one error . . . at a time." The wise parent will not concern himself much with the child's little mistakes in the growing-up process:

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[15] Ibid., p. 74.

[16] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

> Children are children as kittens are kittens. A sober sensible old cat, who sits purring before the fire, does not trouble herself because her kitten is hurrying and dashing here and there, in a fever of excitement, to catch its own tail. She sits still and purrs on. People should do the same with children.[17]

Because he applied these psychological and educational principles in the rearing and education of children, Dilke lived to see their happy fruition in his grandson: "What a blessing that boy has been to my old age!"[18]

Dilke's other great interest, beginning when he was forty-seven and lasting into his seventies, was an attempt to bring about reform in the Literary Fund. As early as 1836, he had expressed in a letter to Britton, Junius scholar and antiquary, his interest in the correction of certain abuses in the administration of the Fund. In this letter he confesses himself pleased that his "eternal opposition" at the Literary Fund meetings had not been mistaken for "personal and fractious carping." He explains his reasons for his opposition:

> I should not, indeed, presume to question the decisions of the committee, if they were but consistent, but rather my own judgment. . . . All I want is some well-defined and intelligible course of proceedings, some recognised principle that we may rest on and refer to as a rule of conduct.[19]

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[17] Ibid., p. 75.

[18] Stephen Gwynn and Gertrude Tuckwell, Life of Sir Charles Dilke, 2 Vols. (London, 1917), I, p. 45.

[19] Dilke, Papers, I, pp. 43-44.

Dilke then points out several instances of apparent mismanagement:

> It stands recorded on the books that the largest sum of money (double the amount of any other vote) was given to the widow of a member of the committee--a man who had died possessed of £7000. When this fact was proved--and it was proved, though the committee would not furnish the proof--it was stated that the money had been voted in error. What, then, is so reasonable as to inquire how the committee were led into so extraordinary an error? Who, according to the established forms, applied for the grant? Who certified to the "distress"? And yet, for want of such certificates, I have seen fifty cases rejected. No trace was to be found on the books or on the papers. Was it on the representation of a member of the committee? Who moved and seconded the resolution? Again, money was lately voted to one person as the widow of a literary man, and a few months afterwards there was a second voted to a second widow. How was the committee misled in the first instance?[20]

The interest in this organization continued to grow until 1858, when, together with Dickens and Forster, his former co-workers on the Daily News of a decade before, Dilke launched an attack on the current management of the fund and called for reform.

As stated by Dilke, Forster, and Dickens, the case of the Reformers was as follows:

> . . . The Literary Fund Society is a Society of abuse, because it is governed, in direct opposition to the evident and expressed intention of its Charter, by an irresponsible Committee; because it limits its proceedings, in direct opposition to the evident and expressed intentions of its Founder, to dealing with the followers of Literature as beggars only; and because its enormous annual expenditure will not bear comparison with the expenditure of any other similar institution on the face

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[20] Ibid., p. 44.

of the earth.[21]

It is reported by Norman MacColl, however, that although the reformers had the best of the argument, they had the worst of the voting.[22] The three leaders in the revolt, with the aid of Lord Lytton, then attempted to found the Guild of Art and Literature, which, it is further reported, did not meet with the success anticipated.[23]

Dilke's political opinions changed very little throughout his life. If he was not so outspoken, it was because the times had changed, not his own views. He professed himself to be a Radical early in life, and he was remembered later for his controversial contributions to the Radical Westminster Review. As Carlyle did later, Dilke in 1821 vigorously advocated the repeal of the Corn Laws. He addressed to Lord John Russell[24] a pamphlet in the form of a letter, which he later had Rodwell and Martin publish under the title "The Source and Remedy of the National Difficulties, deduced from the Principles of Political Economy." In this pamphlet he remarks that he believes Lord Russell to be

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[21]Charles W. Dilke, Charles Dickens, and John Forster, The Case of the Reformers in the Literary Fund (London, 1858), p. 14.

[22]Norman MacColl, "Charles Wentworth Dilke," DNB, ed., Stephen and Lee, (London, 1917), p. 982.

[23]Ibid.

[24]In one year Russell introduced three reforms in the House of Commons about a decade later.

sincere and zealous in his public opinions and conduct and, because of his youth, not likely to have his understanding clouded by established theories. Having been convinced by one of Russell's essays that this author was inclined to liberal principles, Dilke set forth certain arguments in favor of the laboring classes:

> . . . the richest nations are those where the greatest revenue is raised; as if the power of compelling men to labour twice as much at the mills of Gaza for the enjoyment of the Philistines, were the proof of anything but a tyranny or an ignorance twice as powerful.[25]

As editor of the Athenaeum, Dilke fought for liberal measures, such as the unstamped press.[26] Later in life, however, his interest in politics became more passive. He declared that having "once committed myself by trying to take the tin kettle from the tail of a Socialist," he did not care to get further embroiled in politics.[27] In 1864, he was quite satisfied with the British Constitution. He maintained that each form of government may be good under certain circumstances and bad under others. He believed that no form of government could be permanent, for conditions are not permanent. But in his own opinion, a democratic form of government is best:

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[25]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 15.

[26]The "stamped press" was a tax levied against printed media; Dilke believed that instead of economical, the issue was political.

[27]Ibid., p. 47.

> The best government . . . is that which best represents the wishes and the feelings of the governed; and by its plasticity, mobility, adaptability . . . most easily adopts itself to the varying circumstances and feelings of the people. In this respect the British Constitution has shown itself good beyond all the hopes of my early life. . . . The just will of the people peacefully triumphed.[28]

Dilke shared the optimism of the Romantic poets about the future. He was strongly influenced by Godwin, though unlike the Romantic poets, who visualized a better world largely through improved moral and ethical precepts, Dilke's hope lay in science and machinery. Barry Cornwall, a popular author in his day, once leveled innocent fun at Dilke on this score:

> Illustrious Dilke,
> You are sitting there in all the pride of science, railroads, your Elysian fields, chimneys, your delectable mountains, artesian wells, your castles; and yet with all this disadvantage and prejudice against me, I drive on, head foremost, and send you a dozen lines, rendered literally almost from Victor Hugo--a gentleman of some mark (God save it!)--and who will be remembered, perhaps, when Tredgold and the 999 associates have been pounded and pulverized into fresh magnesia, to supply the future bones of the mechanical geniuses of 1939. Why do you, a man of large heart, take under your wing (your waistcoat) the wheels, and levers, and cogs, and spinning jennies of the time. Jennies I would excuse, and even laud you for, but spinning jennies are good for nothing but to spin.[29]

Coupled with this faith in the scientific future, however, was Dilke's belief that the "humanizing influence of literature" would keep pace with scientific discovery.

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[28]As quoted in Marchand, p. 31.

[29]As quoted in Dilke, Papers, I, p. 37-38.

Humanity then would still retain its individuality and gradually become more humane. In a "bowing out" comment in the final Athenaeum issue of 1835, Dilke writes:

> If literature have its humanizing influence--and who can doubt it?--what mighty engines, for the happiness and improvement of society, are at this moment in operation all over the world![30]

It is probable that this "scientific-ethical" optimism rather took the place of religion in Dilke.

Concerning Dilke's religious principles little has been said by himself or by his contemporaries, but what few comments have been made indicate two things: first of all, it appears that he was not a firm believer in traditional Christianity; and secondly, it appears, as in politics, that once his mind was made up about matters of religion, he never changed them. In March, 1818, Dilke reviewed in the Champion a sermon published by his friend Benjamin Bailey, who tells a correspondent "for the sake of the book, &, I think, for his own, he had better have let it alone. He is at best a Sceptic in his principles."[31] Nearly a decade later in an oft-quoted letter to his son, Dilke, after acknowledging that his one son "had been brought up differently from others," writes that from "the first hour

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[30] Athenaeum, December 26, 1835, p. 968.

[31] The Keats Circle, ed. H. E. Rollins, 2 Vols. (Cambridge, 1948), I, p. 20.

I never taught you to believe what I did not myself believe. I have been a thousand times censured for it, but I had that confidence in truth, that I dared put my faith in it and in you."[32] It is likely that this "difference" refers to religious training; otherwise, it is difficult to imagine how Wentworth could be different.

Again, in reference to Dilke's religion, his grandson writes:

> My mother had been a strong Low Church woman, and those of her letters which I have destroyed very clearly show that her chief fear in meeting death was that she would leave me without that class of religious training which she thought essential. My grandfather and my father, although both of them in their way religious men, (and my grandfather, a man of the highest feeling of duty), were neither of them churchgoers, nor of her school of thought.[33]

Thus, while it is difficult to generalize about Dilke's religious views, it is safe to say that he possessed a deep moral and ethical sense and a profound faith in mankind: a type of "social perfectibility" optimism. It appears that the grandson was correct in affirming that Dilke was religious in his way.

Dilke's personality was often a matter for conversation among his friends. Perhaps the chord most expressive of Dilke's character was sounded by Keats in a letter to

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[32] Dilke, Papers, I, pp. 18-19.

[33] Gwynn and Tuckwell, pp. 17-18.

George and Georgiana at Louisville. Keats in October, 1818, had called Dilke a "Godwin Perfectibily /sic/ Man,"[34] and nearly a year later referred to him a "Godwin Methodist."[35] He perhaps meant by these epithets that Dilke must arrive at conclusions through very logical, skeptical steps, a trait which hints at a lack of imagination, though Keats never says as much. But in the same letter Keats writes:

> I wrote Brown a comment on the subject, wherein I explained what I thought of Dilke's Character. Which resolved itself to this conclusion. That Dilke was a Man who cannot feel he has a personal identity unless he has made up his Mind about every thing.[36]

Keats felt that Dilke was stubborn and argumentative, always testing the truth of any assertion, and, at the same time, obstinate and unchanging in his attitudes. This characterization is borne out by Dilke's relatively unchanging religions and political ideas.

Of the many features that are prominent in Dilke's character, the salient one is his cool-headed, deliberate judgment. Even before he took control of the Athenaeum, he had gained a reputation for sound scholarship, sound reasoning, and above all, his capability for giving sound advice. Sir Charles Dilke writes that he ". . . was a man who made a great impression upon his friends by the solidity

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[34] Letters, p. 234.

[35] Ibid., p. 426.

[36] Ibid., pp. 425-426.

of his judgment. The phrase 'consult Dilke'"[37] occurs repeatedly in the letters that Keats, Hood, Lady Morgan, Lamb, and others wrote to various people.

Many letters attest Dilke's good humor, geniality, and capacity for sympathetic understanding, in spite of Chorley's testimony of Dilke's "many prejudices":

> No two persons could be more unlike in many matters of taste, opinion, and feeling than the editor of the "Athenaeum," the late honoured Charles Dilke, and myself. But it was impossible to know and not respect him, however so many were his prejudices (and they were many), however so limited were his sympathies (and they were limited).[38]

But the Hampstead home was noted for its hospitality. The pleasant, witty, and pretty Maria and congenial Dilke had, as a result, almost continuous visitors. Keats' sister, Fanny, more than once spent a pleasant week there, and Keats himself lived with Brown in Hampstead next door to Dilke. Keats writes to his brothers that "Brown and Dilke are very kind and considerate towards me."[39] Dickens, too, calls Dilke a "capital old stout-hearted man,"[40] and again, on the notice of Dilke's death:

> You /Wentworth/ know how heartily I admired and respected him, and what interest I derived from the association I

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[37]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 26.

[38]Henry Fothergill Chorley: Autobiography, Memoir, and Letters, ed., Hewlett, 2 Vols. (London, 1873), I, p. 104.

[39]Letters, pp. 106 and 296.

[40]John Forster, Life of Dickens, 2 Vols. (London, 1872-74), II, p. 310.

> was so fortunate as to have with that sound head, and staunch true heart. Never on this earth shall I fight any fight by the side of a more reliable and faithful man, though I live as long as he![41]

Testimonials to Dilke's honorable reputation as a man are abundant. Forster, the third member of the "reformers," voiced praise for Dilke at his death:

> Sorrow may be . . . expressed that no adequate record should remain of a career which for steadfast purpose, conscientious maintenance of opinion, and pursuit of public objects with disregard of self, was one of very high example. So averse was Mr. Dilke to every kind of display that his name appears to none of the literary investigations which were conducted by him with an acuteness wonderful as his industry, and it was in accordance with his express instructions that the literary journal which his energy and self-denial had established kept silence respecting him at his death. . . .[42]

Mr. Thoms, who was formerly on the staff of the Athenaeum under Dilke and who enlisted Dilke's aid in setting up the new Notes and Queries, wrote:

> Mr. Dilke was one of the truest hearted men and kindest friends it has ever been our good fortune to know. The distinguishing feature of his character was his singular love of truth, and his sense of its value and importance, even in the minutest points and questions of literary history. What the independence of English Literary journalism owes to his spirited exertions, clear judgment, and unflinching honesty of purpose, will, we trust, be told hereafter by an abler pen than that which now announces his deeply lamented death.[43]

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[41]As quoted in Marchand, p. 32.

[42]Forster, II, p. 310. Forster's last statement is somewhat in error; in the "Weekly Gossip" column for the issue August 13, 1864 (p. 214) is the following announcement: "Died, on Wednesday, August 10, at Alice Holt near Farnham, in his seventy-fifth year, CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE: who was for many years intimately connected with the Athenaeum."

[43]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 86.

Mr. Thoms had known Dilke for more than twenty years. He had stated earlier in this article that of the many contributors that had submitted papers to Notes and Queries, none had submitted such excellent ones as had Dilke. In answer to inquiries of a certain correspondent, Thoms wrote again the following month:

> None but those who know how thoroughly our lamented friend exhausted every inquiry he took up, can form an idea of the perseverance and ingenuity with which he pursued such researches. He had no pet theory to maintain. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, was the end and object of all his inquiries, and in the search after this he was indefatigable.[44]

His contemporaries likewise recognized Dilke's worth as a literary critic. Elizabeth Barrett told a correspondent that Dilke was not brilliant, but that he was "a Brutus in criticism."[45] Even during Dilke's lifetime, indeed, even before the main body of his work was completed, he was an acknowledged critic. As early as 1836, Mr. Britton, the noted antiquary, called Dilke the "first critic" in England.[46] In 1852, a writer for Men of the Time reports:

> Now and then he may be seen in the Reading Room of the British Museum . . . poring over some seldon-searched page, printed perhaps by a flying press during the turmoil of the Civil Wars, or, it may be, in the less sanguinary but scarcely less exciting day of "Wilkes and '45," when lord mayors and sheriffs /, / bearded Parliaments and Ministers, and the press was struggling to be

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[44] Ibid.

[45] April, 1850, to Miss Mitford; Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, ed. F. Kenyon, London, 1897.

[46] Dilke, Papers, I, p. 42.

> free. In some number of the "Athenaeum" thereafter may be detected, perhaps, a paper evidently written by a man who had . . . looked at it, turned it about, examined every passage of its history, connexions and relations, had tested it by the standards of logic and of strong common sense, and then wound up pen in hand, by pouring out the whole results in some fluent columns of type deserving a more distinctive existence than that generally attaching to the articles in a weekly journal.[47]

Dilke's reputation as a critic rests largely upon his introductions to the plays in the Continuation, his contributions to the London Magazine, and his eighteenth century studies that appeared in the Athenaeum and Notes and Queries. But his worth as a literary figure does not reside wholly in his valuable criticism. His prominent place in the Keats Circle, his intimate relationship with practically all the leading literary men of his day, and most of all his editorship of England's leading literary magazine for over a decade and a half merit for him a prominent place in the literary history of nineteenth century England. In the eyes of his contemporaries, at least of those who knew him, one of his greatest achievements was his editorship of the Athenaeum. In order to appreciate the difficulties facing this editor, and to evaluate his direct and indirect influence upon the literary periodicals of the first half of the century, it is appropriate to examine the status of these periodicals and bring Dilke's contribution into proper focus.

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[47]Men of the Time (London, 1852), p. 123.

CHAPTER II

MAGAZINES IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

The age in which Dilke lived was a heyday for the literary periodical. It was a period of tremendous growth not only in the number that came into existence but in the variety of interests that these periodicals served. Periodicals that were started near the turn of the century were radically different in format, feature articles, editorial policy, and even day-to-day news coverage from those that came twenty-five to thirty years later. Owing, no doubt, to the tremendous competition at that time, the later magazines are characterized more than anything else by their variety. Each periodical appears to have sensed a need for some peculiar or distinguishing feature. Thus, the magazines of the 1830's could boast of many features not found in the earlier magazines.

The political, literary, and even personal prejudices that governed the editorial policies of these periodicals were of paramount importance. The industrial revolution had by 1802 forced issues between Whig, Tory, and Radical to become sharply defined, while at the same time the Romantic type of literature, so different from

the eighteenth century's approach to style, subject matter, and purpose, was beginning to demand a hearing from the critics. These considerations were not overlooked by the editors and the sponsors of periodicals.

The critic as well as the editors sometimes reacted according to personal, political, literary, religious, or even mercenary considerations. Walter Graham defines in part the outside pressures serving to influence literary criticism of the nineteenth century:

> . . . in two ways the Review of the nineteenth century differed from earlier periodicals of the same type--it was comparatively free from the bookseller's influence, and it was affected as never before by political partisanship.[1]

Although evidence does not bear out the first of Mr. Graham's distinctions, there can be little argument over the soundness of his second. However, the practice of securing political backing for nominally literary productions was not peculiar to the first part of the Romantic Period. The eighteenth century, too, had its share of political propaganda in literary magazines. The Tatler and Spectator, with their comparatively pale political connections, are notable exceptions to the rule. Even so, the nineteenth century periodical, as Graham states above, "was affected as never before by political partisanship."

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[1]Walter Graham, English Literary Periodicals (New York, 1930), p. 227.

At the turn of the century noteworthy periodicals, ostensibly literary, sprang up to disseminate political propaganda. It is true that the Edinburgh Review was begun in 1802 not primarily as a party organ, although its founders--Smith, Jeffrey, and Horner--were decidedly Whiggish. Wit and fun were to be their first concern. Graham explains that the idea "was not to avoid politics altogether, but to allow them to be handled by the partisans of either camp, as long as they could provide amusement and information for the reader."[2] But as Francis Jeffrey gradually took over complete editorship of the Edinburgh Review, so did the magazine gradually gain the reputation as a party mouthpiece. Furthermore, Jeffrey's conservative literary leanings cause him to be remembered for his bad criticism. In reviewing Southey's Thalaba, Jeffrey says: "Poetry has this much, at least, in common with religion, that its standards were fixed long ago, by certain inspired writers, whose authority it is no longer lawful to call in question."[3] Such a dogmatic and absolute basis for criticism was outmoded and could not be reconciled with Romantic experimentation and novelty.

The Quarterly Review was established in 1809 for the purpose of opposing the Whig-governed Edinburgh Review:

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[2]Ibid., pp. 233-4.
[3]Ibid., p. 235.

". . . it was frankly intended as a party organ,"[4] though, like the Edinburgh Review, its avowed paramount interests were literary. Smarting under the Edinburgh Review's adverse criticism of his Marmion, Sir Walter Scott has considered setting up a magazine in opposition to the Edinburgh Review's Whiggish principles. He was persuaded by Murray, publisher of the proposed journal, to be a member with Southey on the regular staff of the Quarterly Review.[5] The general political conservatism of the Lake Poets was becoming known, and paradoxically enough, as the Whiggish organ rebelled against the new poetry, the Tory-minded Quarterly became liberal-minded so far as literature was concerned, and, in consequence, championed the Lake School.[6]

But if Jeffrey frequently allowed his conservative bias to affect his literary judgment of Wordsworth and others, the Quarterly Review's critics evinced an even more narrow-minded attitude in their championship of the Established Church, "the palladium of privileged

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[4]Josephine Bauer, The London Magazine (Copenhagen, 1953), pp. 46-7.

[5]He was "one of the most conservative influences in the circle of the Quarterly pens, and helped to give the Review throughout a number of years the character of narrowness and intolerance which was peculiarly his own." (Quoted from Bauer, p. 47)

[6]Graham, p. 245.

Aristocracy."

> Whatever tended to decrease general respect for the established order, the Church, the monarchial form of government, the laws, the king, and the landed aristocracy, was evil. Modified and varied by its applications, this was always the major consideration.
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> For this reason, the Quarterly Review, during the first half of the nineteenth century, earned a reputation for unfairness and vituperation. The abusive and usually unwarranted castigations of Keats, Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, Lamb, Shelley, Tennyson, Macaulay, Carlyle, Dickens, and Charlotte Bronte owed their virulence to party or religious prejudice.[7]

Probably of this group Hunt and Hazlitt were the chief antagonists of the Quarterly Review policy. Both their works and their characters were assailed, but the anonymous attackers doubtless came off second-best in the articles in the Examiner and in Hazlitt's Letter to Gifford and later in his Spirit of the Age. It is said that while neither side gave nor expected quarter, probably "Hunt and Hazlitt rather gloried in these mud-slinging, name-calling battles."[8] At any rate, Hunt's and Hazlitt's effective defense against unwarranted attacks in the Quarterly Review probably served as well as anything else to give that periodical its deserved bad reputation. It was felt that, in view of the disfavor the Quarterly Review had brought upon itself, a new Tory organ was needed. Accordingly, William Blackwood

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Bauer, p. 48.

projected Blackwood's Magazine in Edinburgh, the northern capital harboring the Edinburgh Review. The Tory magazine purported to offer "more scope for lightness, variety, humor, and original composition."[9] After some difficulty with two editors, Pringle and Cleghorn, who, as it happened, proved false to Blackwood's design and joined Whig forces, Blackwood engaged John Wilson (Christopher North), James Hogg (the "Ettrick Shepherd"), and John Gibson Lockhart, to assume editorial responsibility. In their first number they included the famous "Chaldee Manuscript," a somewhat blasphemous satire giving the history of the Cleghorn-Pringle episode and saturated with Tory propaganda. This article resulted in lawsuits, outraged rebuttals, and an immediate fame throughout the country for the new Tory publication. "Blackwood was delighted. He cheerfully paid off outraged individuals, made apologies, disclaimed knowledge of the contents, and attributed the whole thing to the injudicious high spirits of youth, secretly patting his impudent young crew on the back and encouraging them in their reckless buffoonery."[10] But while it was true that as a political instrument Blackwood's Magazine was

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[9]Ibid., p. 52.

[10]Ibid., p. 54.

unscrupulous, its relative fairness and impartiality as a literary magazine redeemed it to some extent. John Scott, who will never be remembered for undue kindness towards Blackwood's Magazine, observed:

> Its principal recommendation is a spirit of life. . . . Generally speaking, it has done important service to the cause of taste and truth by its poetical criticisms: indeed, before its appearance, there was no periodical work whatever, belonging to any part of the united kingdom, that could be looked to for a decent judgment on poetry. . . . It has vindicated with ability, energy, and effect, several neglected and callumniated, but highly deserving poetical reputations.[11]

The final contending titan, the first issue of which appeared in 1824, was distinguished from a literary standpoint in that it professed no literary pretensions. Poetry could not help England "spin cotton or abolish poor laws or institute free trade."[12] This was the Westminster Review (1824), and its radical policy saw fit to castigate not only the tamer Edinburgh Review or the diametrically opposed Quarterly Review and Blackwood's Magazine, but Leigh Hunt's liberal Examiner as well. The Benthamite school boasted such luminaries as James and John Stuart Mill and John Bowring. What literary value this frankly political magazine did possess is contained in its book reviews, and even in these the ultimate purpose is

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[11]Quoted from Bauer, p. 54.

[12]Ibid., p. 51.

Utilitarian propaganda. Furthermore, authors and institutions under traditional Tory sponsorship finally became vulnerable to attack. For the first time Sir Walter Scott received unfriendly reviews, the Benthamite reviewers claiming that his Tory prejudices rendered him unfit for interpretation of literature. The classics were attacked by the Utilitarians. Certain books were admitted as beneficial to mankind only because of their tendency to ". . . help the more enlightened to share in the sympathies and understand the thoughts and feelings of a portion of our fellow men."[13] Finally, the Westminster Review violated the most sacred of publisher's creeds, by modern-day standards at least, in hiring free-lance reviewers to spread the word of Jeremy Bentham on well-defined and predetermined stands, depending on whether or not a particular book was friendly to Utilitarian thought. One of the few good things to be said for the literary pretensions of the Westminster Review is that it is one of the few contemporary magazines favorable to Coleridge, who, at the time Mill reviewed the Works of Coleridge (1829), was well known to have Tory leanings. Yet even here the weakness of biased criticism is well illustrated in the reasons for Mill's admiration for Coleridge, who, according to Mill,

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[13]Bauer, p. 51.

desired to promote happiness in the world, was a great thinker, and evinced a great interest in the individual. Graham states that "certainly, only a Benthamite critic would have regarded these as evidences of poetic genius, and only a Radical would have given such disproportionate attention and praise to Coleridge's revolutionary poems"[14] From a literary viewpoint these four great periodicals were anything but impartial, as everyone knew. During this time conscientious men of letters envisioned a literary journal noted for its impartiality, regardless of politics, booksellers, religion, or familiarity with authors.

What consequently evolved between the years 1809-1828 was a literary magazine devoted primarily to criticism and "original papers." It was somewhat different from anything the preceding ages had seen, but more important, it suggested that competition was forcing editors to adopt policies different from those of other contemporary publications. Although political propaganda was not

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[14]Graham, p. 253. Still, if we consider needed reforms brought about largely through the influence of this organ, much good was accomplished. At least one critic protests: "Fathers of Philistinism though they were, they uttered much truth and uttered it bravely and with dignity. One feels that when, in 1828, their school already breaking up, the Utilitarian intellectuals who followed Mill seceded definitely from the review which they had made great but which had never been their own, there passed away a glory from the earth." (George L. Nesbitt, Benthamite Reviewing, New York, 1934, p. 129.)

yet dormant, nearly all the nominally literary magazines, like Leigh Hunt's Examiner, proclaimed impartiality in large capitals.

Yet the "new magazine" represented by no means a break from the past. Aiken's Athenaeum, an ill-fated weekly started in 1807, may be remembered for two reasons: it gave its name to a better and more fortunate enterprise, and it incorporated in its columns a variety of subject matter;

> . . . not only poetry and essays, but meteorological reports, discoveries and improvements in the arts and manufactures, obituaries, domestic and foreign occurrences, bankrupts, a retrospect of public affairs, commercial reports, prices of stocks and agricultural notes.[15]

These varied additions were by no means new to the early nineteenth century periodical, and yet it is clear that such publications began more and more to take on the appearances of a weekly newspaper.

Aside from the elusive ideal of impartiality and the attempt to appeal to tastes not strictly literary, there were other less-pronounced differences, if we may judge from an editorial by John Scott:

> The days are passed when Vindex could be suffered to dispute with Eudosius, through various successive Numbers, which is most eligible--a married or a single state? When an editor might announce, with self-congratulation, a series of Letters from Silvanus on

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[15] Ibid., p. 272.

> affectation of manner, or expect Amicus to recruit his subscription list amongst respectable families, by recommending the Ladies to read Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse. Opinion now busies itself with more venturesome themes than of yore; discussion must start fleeter and subtler game; excitement must be stronger; the stakes of all sorts higher--the game more complicated and hazardous.[16]

Thus in the accelerated evolutionary process of the literary magazine it is apparent that competition was forcing periodicals to appeal for their financial support to a wider reading public than the merely literary or political.

Leigh Hunt's Examiner (1808) could hardly be considered typical of the new magazine; it was too successful for that. But it may be considered representative in its attempts at impartiality. Hunt had fought with Tory publications, especially the Quarterly Review, for some time. At the same time his crusade for fairness in judging literary merit was rewarded with fair success:

> . . . The object of the paper was chiefly "to assist in producing Reform in Parliament, liberality of opinion in general (especially freedom from superstition), and a fusion of literary taste into all subjects whatsoever. It began with being "of no party; but Reform soon gave it one."[17]

And again, in dismissing editorial policies of rival magazines:

> "There is a flourish of trumpets, and a worm is thrown up." Hunt proposed IMPARTIALITY in large capitals, dwelt on the independent intention of the journal in

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[16]Quoted from Bauer, p. 34.

[17]Edmund Blunden, Leigh Hunt's "Examiner" Examined (New York and London, 1928), p. ix.

> politics, the theatre and the fine arts, assailed jockeys and cock-fighters, and declared NO ADVERTISEMENTS WILL BE ADMITTED.[18]

But whether Hunt would have conceded it or not, he was, by virtue of opposing the Tory stand, taking a stand himself. Politics was still at this time an important factor in literature. On the other hand, this final statement, the declaration that "No Advertisements Will Be Admitted," refers to his hatred of puffery, the practice of certain unscrupulous booksellers who would pay for a friendly review. These bookseller puffs, like politics, were yet another type of pressure. But for the later efforts of Dilke, puffery might well have become an instrument of bigotry, dishonesty, and partiality gross enough to dwarf the significance of any political unfairness.

The London Review (1809), the New Monthly Magazine (1814), the Retrospective Review (1820), and the London Magazine (1820) to some extent sounded the alarm for impartiality and freedom from political bias. Especially did the London Magazine and its editor, John Scott, persistently deplore the practice of puffery. Their make-up was largely traditional, including besides articles of literary interest, obituaries, market reports, and the like. Yet each claimed a particular province of its own, and these were, so to speak, their distinguishing features.

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[18]Ibid., p. xi.

The discriminating characteristic of the London Review is that all articles were signed. In the first issue the editor states:

> The Man, who in the genuine spirit of criticism impartially distributes praise or blame to the work he reviews, has no more need to hide his name than the tradesman has, who records himself over his shop-door; for whom has he to fear, or of what to be ashamed? Learning has no truer friend; genius no better counsellor, no safer guide.
>
> Every one must confess, that there is a dangerous temptation, an unmanly security, an unfair advantage in concealment: why then should any man, who seeks not to injure but to benefit his contemporaries, resort to it? . . . A piece of crape may be a convenient mask for a highwayman; but a man, that goes upon an honest errand, does not want it and will disdain to wear it.[19]

For a man on a genuinely "honest errand" anonymity may in some cases promote honesty rather than fraudulence. Certainly, Dilke thought so in reference to impartial book-reviewing.

The New Monthly, too, elected to retain the traditional make-up of its predecessors. Well aware of the public's taste and desire, this magazine tamely declares on its title page for several years its intent at conventionality:

> Monthly Magazines have opened a way for every kind of inquiry and information. The intelligence and discussion contained in them are very extensive and various; and they have been the means of diffusing a general habit of reading through the nation, which in

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[19]Quoted from Graham, p. 240.

> a certain degree hath enlarged the public understanding. HERE, too, are preserved a multitude of useful hints, observations, and facts, which otherwise might have never appeared.[20]

Yet the New Monthly found its cause for existence in opposing the policies of the Monthly Magazine, which the New Monthly was determined to put out of business. Coming dangerously close to politics, the New Monthly declares:

> We need but to cite the Monthly Magazine, whose Editor, nursed in the school of Jacobinism, commenced his career as a promulgator of Paine's Rights of Men, and who, with all the consistency of our pseudo-patriots, has of late years been one of the most zealous worshipers of that Moloch, Buonaparte. The political poison so artfully introduced into every department of that work, and mixed up with a due proportion of ribaldry and irreligion, was calculated to produce a mischievous impression upon the minds of the unthinking and inexperienced at home, and to misrepresent and degrade the character of the country abroad. These considerations could not but excite in every honest mind a thorough abhorrence of its principles and a strong desire to counteract its tendency. To such feelings the New Monthly Magazine owes its existence.[21]

As one might suspect, this periodical proved to be one whose critical independence was later called in question for the bias of its editorial policy.

The Retrospective Review included in its "prospectus" a double editorial policy, presumably under the delusion that if one editorial policy would sell, two ought to sell still better. While stating that it intended to preserve the interesting form and manner, that is, the

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[20] Ibid., p. 284

[21] Ibid., pp. 284-285.

traditional makeup of the present Reviews, the Retrospective announced certain general purposes:

> The design of this review of past literature had its origin in the decisively modern direction of the reading of the present day--, it is an attempt to recall the public from an exclusive attention to new books, by making the merit of old ones the subject of critical discussion. . . . from the nature of the work, and from our unfeigned horror of either political or personal invective, we shall neither pamper the depraved appetites of listless readers, by piquant abuse--nor amuse one part of the public, by holding up another to scorn and mockery;--at any rate, we shall not be driven to a resource of this description through a paucity of interesting matter which we may legitimately present to our readers. While the present Reviews are confined to the books of the day, we have the liberty of ranging over the whole extent of modern literature. Criticism, which, when able and just, is always pleasing, we shall combine with copious and characteristic extracts, analyses, and biographical accounts, so as in some measure to supply the dearth of works on the history of literature in our own language; for it is to be lamented, that except the unfinished work of Warton, and a few detached Essays, we have no regular history of English poetry--and that of the prose writers, their language, style, spirit, and character, there exists no account at all.[22]

By showing prejudice to no person or group, the Retrospective claimed an impartiality attained by no other contemporary magazine. Unfortunately, the plan of the Retrospective Review apparently did not offer sufficient attraction to the "depraved appetites of listless readers." It was relatively short-lived. The reading public wanted controversy.

One other major magazine, the London Magazine, also

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[22] Ibid, p. 249.

had its salient characteristics. The short career of its admirable editor, John Scott, was distinguished by the crusading efforts in his editorship of the leading literary magazine of the day. The London Magazine, which proposed to portray the "mighty heart" of London, soon had the reputation of being "fearless and fair." For a matter of political principle, Editor John Scott was killed in a duel with one of Lockhart's seconds.[23] While he was editor, Scott did more than anyone else before Dilke to hold up to deserved ridicule and scorn the growing practice of puffery. The London Magazine lasted not quite a decade, but volume for volume, it probably contains as many as or more literary masterpieces than any magazine before or since. It accepted or rejected contributions according to strict literary merit, from radical Dilke through middle-of-the-road Lamb, to conservative DeQuincey.

In this milieu of literary periodicals Dilke made a career for himself and gave needed direction to subsequent literary, political, and social criticism. These were periodicals "in their palmy days," writes an anonymous commentator in Men of the Time a generation later. And it

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[23]Lockhart, one of the editors of the Quarterly Magazine, engaged as a second Christy, whom Dilke remembers meeting "before and after" and who seemed to be a "mild, amiable man."

is against this background of political, literary, religious, or professional bias that the Athenaeum under Dilke ultimately attained marked success as a thoroughly independent magazine: independent of politics, though its editor professed himself a radical; independent of puffery, though its early publisher was the most notorious of all puffing publishers, Henry Coburn. The first editor was James Silk Buckingham, who wrote in the first issue in January, 1828:

> We shall endeavor . . . first to lay a foundation of solid and useful knowledge, and on this to erect a superstructure of as much harmony, ornament, and beauty, as our own powers and the encouraging aid of those who approve the design, will enable us to construct. If the edifice so reared be worthy of the name we have chosen for it, and, like the Athenaeum of antiquity, should become the resort of the most distinguished philosophers, historians, orators, and poets of our day,--we shall endeavor so to arrange and illustrate their several compositions, that they may themselves be proud of the records of their fame, and that their admirers may deem them worthy of preservation among the permanent memorials of their times.[24]

If ever the Athenaeum became "the resort of most distinguished philosophers, historians, orators, and poets of our day," it was not to Buckingham's credit. He simply had too many experiments going at one time to do justice to any of them. The fortunes of the new magazine varied considerably for the next two years, finally being offered for sale at the ridiculously low price of eighty pounds. There were no buyers. Then in 1830 Dilke became its editor and three-fourths owner.

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[24] Athenaeum, January 2, 1828, p. 2.

Under Dilke's regime the Athenaeum was established on a sound financial basis; its success was astounding even to contemporaries. In time it achieved the position of undisputed pre-eminence among literary magazines. It was respected for its honesty, accuracy, and most of all, for the crusading efforts of its editor in maintaining complete freedom from all outside pressure. Chapter III of this dissertation is devoted to an analysis of the Athenaeum under the editorship of Dilke.

CHAPTER III

CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE AND THE ATHENAEUM

Though many journals from 1808 to 1830 appear to have made honest and conscientious attempts at impartiality, few, if any, gained the confidence of the public. Eventually political, literary, or puffery interest prevailed in spite of good intentions. Purely personal vituperation, as in the case of Hunt and Hazlitt, and to a lesser extent, Keats, appears to have declined somewhat. The Quarterly Review in 1833 was less enthusiastic about Tennyson's poems than it might have been if Tennyson had not been one of the Cambridge Apostles, a group of young men who fought for reform mainly through the church.[1] While Tennyson tended to exaggerate the treatment he received at the hands of Gifford and Croker, the editors of the Quarterly Review, it is not unfair to suppose that high Tory principles in a poet still meant more to these editors than Tennyson's actual merit as a poet.

In addition to the pressures upon him from political owners, the church, and practitioners of puffery,

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[1]Tennyson was more than usually sensitive to criticism; actually, the review is only slightly caustic.

Dilke had at least one other problem to contend with--finances. While the Athenaeum appeared reasonably prosperous and maintained a front of dignity and respectability from 1828 to 1830, it belied its appearance with its forced variations in price, its number of issues per month, its changes of proprietorship and editorship, and even its name. After only six months of ownership, James Silk Buckingham in June, 1828, sold his stock to Maurice, one of the Cambridge Apostles, and others of his friends. The Athenaeum, under the editorship of Maurice, was probably financed by the Cambridge Apostles.

By this time the journal was becoming an "organ" of propaganda for the Cambridge Apostles. The editor and his associates were upright, conscientious, sincere men, devoted to the principles of fair play, but their affiliation with the Cambridge Apostle group resulted in blatant and overt propaganda. As a consequence the Athenaeum's policies were right or wrong depending on its readers' sympathies. R. C. Trench, in sympathy with the new publication, wrote to a correspondent in 1828:

> That paper, the Athenaeum, which by-the-by, is entirely written by Apostles, should it obtain an extensive circulation, is calculated to do much good. It is a paper not merely of principle, but, what is almost equally important, of principles--certain fixed rules to which compositions are referred, and by which they are judged. In this it is superior, not merely to contemporary papers, but to the reviews of the highest pretension.[2]

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[2]Quoted from Marchand, pp. 10-11.

On the other hand, a writer in the relatively independent London Magazine did not share these sentiments concerning the Athenaeum's publishers, who were to him "a set of dreaming half-Platonic, half-Jacob Behmenite mystics, who hate all useful arts, think it vulgar to talk of free trade, pay no attention to literary novelties, and consider education a disadvantage."[3]

The Cambridge Apostles were intelligent, devoted young men and included among their membership John Kemble, Lord Tennyson, Arthur Hallam, and R. M. Milnes, who later wrote the Life of Keats. They dreamed of peaceful reform in the world mainly through the church. Maurice, editor of the Athenaeum and one of the most active members in the society, had good intentions and worked towards strict impartiality. But in spite of his determined efforts, the magazine was soon known to be published by men having like principles.

The Apostles who strove for impartiality, doubtless believed that they had attained it; but they could, in fact, lay claim to little more of that elusive ideal than any of their contemporaries. To one acquainted with the history of periodicals to 1830, it would seem that complete impartiality towards friends, booksellers, religion, politics was

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[3]Ibid., p. 12.

virtually impossible, especially when compounded in an editor with incompetence, narrowness, ignorance, or other defects.

Early in 1830, the Athenaeum and London Chronicle once more changed its name to The Athenaeum and Weekly Review of English and Foreign Literature, Fine Arts and Works of Embellishment and was sold to Holmes, a printer. In May, 1829, Maurice had resigned and John Sterling had become editor, in which position he remained even after Holmes had become owner. The entire stock of the Athenaeum was reputed to have been offered for sale shortly thereafter for eighty pounds. Financially, it had not proved a success.

That the fortunes of the new magazine were in a perilous state was no secret to the British reading public. If it were to survive, something had to be done to rescue the Athenaeum from the oblivion into which it was rapidly sinking. According to Professor Marchand, something was done:

> /In/the early months of 1830 it began to be apparent that some new blood had come into the management as well as the contributors' lists of the Athenaeum. There was more liveliness and satiric punch in some of the reviews. Increased attention was given to foreign literature, both in reviews and in correspondence from Vienna, Madrid, Naples, Rome, Florence, Munich, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, as well as Paris.[4]

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[4] Ibid., p. 24.

Sterling had called in from the London Magazine, which had failed and ceased publication the preceding year, a number of competent men, among whom were John Reynolds, Allan Cunningham, Charles Dance, perhaps also Thomas Hood, Charles Lamb, and Dilke. The "Prospectus of the New Series" for the issue of January 16, 1830, stated that the literary management would continue to be "under the direction of the parties who have hitherto conducted it," but that "a great accession of literary talent has been secured. . . by engaging the aid of several eminent and popular authors."[5]

It is difficult to say exactly how much influence Dilke exercised on the management in early 1830. That he had at least a partial interest by January is evident. At this time one of Dilke's favored projects--that of assigning specialists to review works in certain fields--was beginning to be evident, as the notice "To the Reader" which appeared in the issue for February 27, bears out:

> The departments of the Fine Arts, the Sciences, and the Drama, are all under the direction of separate individuals, distinguished by their attainments in the part allotted to them; and even in the Literary Reviews, the same classification has been carried into effect to a degree, it is supposed, hitherto unattempted.[6]

This practice of having specialists in their various fields do the reviewing apparently was, as the article states,

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p. 25.

"hitherto unattempted," but in later days the Athenaeum could point with pride to its record of "specialists," even though many of their articles were unsigned. Marchand conjectures that Dilke was probably responsible for this innovation, even though the first major change under the new editorship occurred in June, 1831, after Dilke had been editor for about a year. It was apparent, notwithstanding the new talent, that some drastic measures were necessary to keep the Athenaeum from financial ruin. It had never been a paying venture and for most of its short period of existence had been actually a burden on the proprietors' purses. Dilke, apparently about the first of the year 1831 and apparently without support for his proposal from Reynolds, Hood, and perhaps other stockholders, considered lowering the price per issue to one-half its original cost, from eightpence to fourpence. His proposal was not viewed with favor by other proprietors, notably Reynolds and Hood, who objected strenuously to the slash in price for fear it would give a tatterish character to the journal. Consequently, Dilke took his friends' advice--for a time, at least. But in June, 1831, the price was lowered not to the "respectable" sixpence, the figure Reynolds would tolerate, but to Dilke's original suggestion of fourpence; whereupon Reynolds and probably Hood sold their shares of the Athenaeum to Dilke,

though both continued to be close friends of Dilke and to contribute to the magazine for many years. Says Sir Charles, "The change was made. . . . and with magnificent results."[7] On the second day after the price-cut the circulation increased to six times its former sale, or to a phenomenal 18,000. At the same time Dilke announced to his readers that the change would have been effected at the first of the year but for the entreaties of "earnest friends who advised against price reduction." Directed probably to these "earnest friends," Dilke's next issue attempts to justify his hopes for such a large sale:

> If the readers of Literary Papers be so limited as they imagine, who were the thirty thousand purchasers of the early volumes of the Family Library?--who the fourteen thousand purchasers of the Lives of the Painters, a subject limited in its interest to the highest and most refined class of informed minds?[8]

Six months later Dilke wrote concerning the success of his venture that the Athenaeum maintained a circulation greater than that of any other literary paper, and still later that the Athenaeum's "success has been more rapid and complete than any in the history of periodical literature."[9]

But this was only the first step of many throughout the years in the struggle to keep the periodical from failing

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[7]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 26.

[8]Quoted from Marchand, p. 37.

[9]Ibid.

financially. Sir Charles Dilke writes that in 1840, ten years after Dilke became editor, the Athenaeum's dividends were yet very small:

> It was now a success, but not yet a financial success, if past losses were added to the wrong side of the account. It was paying well, but had not repaid the money which had been sunk on it at first. It was fifteen or twenty years--from 1830--before this was the case. . . .[10]

From the beginning Dilke realized that to keep the Athenaeum solvent he must establish a well-recognized, clear-cut editorial policy. Years of experience and observation had convinced him, too, that the Athenaeum trademark had to be genuine, as the majority of its predecessors were not. Dilke chose as that trademark impartiality.

The cry for impartiality had been echoed by honest and well-meaning editors for a long while, by Leigh Hunt, by John Scott, and by a host of others. In varying degrees they had all failed. Dilke saw that impartiality necessitated alienation from all influences, and this required drastic actions on the part of an editor. He had seen enough of literary periodicals to know that the success of such a venture depended almost entirely on the character and principles of its editor. His consequent actions, for which he has been mildly criticized, can perhaps be better appreciated if considered against the background of magazine history.

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[10]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 47.

One such instance of impartiality was his refusal to enter into society, to communicate in fact with no one in a social manner except a few old and established friends. Furthermore, he insisted that his staff follow his example, one that proved irksome to many of his employees. Chorley, an old Quaker and music critic for the journal, wrote to Dilke in 1834 to ask permission to attend a social function at Lady Blessington's. Dilke replied that he may attend "because she is Lady Blessington," but to go nowhere else.[11]

Other measures were taken to insure impartiality. Dilke made it a practice to keep the identity of his reviewers a well-guarded secret. Sir Charles Dilke tells of a "wigging" Chorley received from the editor for confessing to Miss Mitford that George Darley was the author of an article in the Athenaeum.[12] While other less scrupupulous editors used anonymity as a protection, Dilke looked favorably upon it as still another aid towards honesty and fairness. He took care that the author of the book to be reviewed should not be acquainted with the reviewer. Dilke and Reynolds had a slight altercation over that matter at one time. Reynolds had written to Dilke to request

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[11] Ibid., p. 31.

[12] Ibid., p. 33.

permission to review a particular book, only to receive a veiled reply in Dilke's inquiry as to whether Reynolds knew the author; whereupon Reynolds answered: ". . . you may consign it to some independent hand, according to your religious customs. I, alas! know author and bookseller."[13] It was an unkind cut, but this was not the first or last instance of strained relationships between Dilke and Reynolds. Nor was it the only incident in which the editor suffered for his principles. To the poet Robert Montgomery, who had sent some works to his home, Dilke writes:

> I am sensible of your kindness, but it has ever been a rule with me since my first connexion with the Athenaeum to decline presents of books from authors or publishers. Even duplicates have invariably been returned. There have been many occasions when the abiding by this rule has given me pain and has had the appearance of affectation and pretence.[14]

And there were occasions, of course, when the editor had to assert himself in no uncertain terms to publishers, to disgruntled authors, and even to staff members. This tough-minded streak in Dilke was doubtless in great part responsible for the Athenaeum's ever-rising reputation as a fair and just journal. In a letter to his Paris correspondent he administered a tongue-lashing for the latter's unsagacious acceptance of advance prints:

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[13] Ibid., p. 45.

[14] Ibid., p. 38.

> I cannot let a single post pass without replying to your letter. You have, it appears, been in communication with the principal publishers in Paris. Having accepted advance-sheets you are unable to condemn their works. What then is the value of your criticism? During the many years that I have had the Athenaeum I have never asked a favour of a publisher. Favour and independence are incompatible. It is no use under these circumstances for you to send me reviews at present.[15]

This tough-minded resistance to outside interference extended also to authors. Mr. Atherstone, who was treated rather harshly for his Fall of Nineveh, "writes in a rage, and is told in reply, that the only three definite statements that he makes are all, without his being aware of it, absolutely unture, and that he 'has moreover, been only tickled, not tomahawked.'"[16] Finally, as illustrative of the lengths to which Dilke would go to keep from compromising the dignity and honor of his journal, he writes to a firm complaining that Alaric Watts gave an unfavorable review of a book because he disliked its author:

> It is utterly false that Mr. Alaric Watts is, or ever was, connected with the Athenaeum. After this, I need scarely add, that he did not write the review of Mr. R.'s book. I now submit that I ought not to rest content with your stating this fact to Mr. R. for the purpose of "disabusing his mind." I care not in what ridiculous suspicions the mortified vanity of a weak man may find a consolation, but he has, it appears, stated these circumstances to others; circumstances which, if true, seriously affect the character of the journal, and, I think, I have a right to require,

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[15] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

[16] Ibid., p. 34.

> either that he give up his authority, or admit in writing, that he is satisfied there never was the slightest foundation for such an assertion.[17]

Dickens was probably impressed most by this trait in Dilke when he called him a "capital old stouthearted man."[18]

A third major obstacle that Dilke was forced to overcome in his crusade for independence was political and religious pressure brought upon him. This might have been a difficult one for Dilke, for early in his career he was known to favor liberal measures and to hold somewhat unorthodox religious views. Even during his editorship, he never made a secret of it. But he circumvented the issues rather neatly in that he would allow no reviews or "original papers" to appear in his journals that might raise political or religious controversy. The Athenaeum was, after all, a literary magazine.

> We do not concern ourselves with politics--our paper is, as it professes to be, a sanctuary for literature and literary men; and when compelled to notice political works, we confine ourselves usually to an exposition of the writer's views, and express our own opinions rather of the manner than the matter of the books.[19]

An instance of his eagle-eyed scrutiny of what went into its pages is afforded in one of Elizabeth Barrett's letters wherein she agrees to do a series of articles on "Christian

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[17] Ibid., p. 49.

[18] Forster, II, p. 310.

[19] Athenaeum, July 10, 1830, p. 425.

Greek Poets" under the stipulation that she will avoid controversial theological matters.[20] Such was Dilke's safeguard against possible misinterpretation of the Athenaeum's neutral policies. The Examiner a score of years earlier had proclaimed "impartiality" by "being of no party," but having been drawn into political controversy, "reform soon gave it one."[21] The only safe method was for Dilke to refrain altogether from taking sides in such controversial issues.

Still another complaint against periodical reviewers in the 1830's was that personal likes or dislikes for the authors of books reviewed were deciding factors among the critics rather than any intrinsic merits of the books themselves. To this charge Dilke and his staff could give assurances only that such was not the policy of the Athenaeum. Commenting on an article appearing in a rival magazine, the Souvenir, Dilke agreed with the editor that book reviews are influenced too much by private feeling:

> . . . it is a charge to which all criticism ever has been, and ever must be subject; and against which the Athenaeum does not affect to have any special armour of proof; we have warm hearts in our bodies, and not flint stones; and there is no doubt we know our friends from our enemies. But what is the amount of the possible wrong judgment from this wrong bias?--out of five hundred works reviewed, we doubt if twenty, or even ten, be written by friends or enemies.[22]

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[20] Letters, I, p. 9 .

[21] Blunden, p. ix.

[22] Quoted from Marchand, p. 109.

Perhaps the Athenaeum had no impenetrable armor, but Dilke was too modest in saying that it had none at all. In view of his social policies, not only for himself but for his regular staff as well, it is safe to assume that the Athenaeum was less vulnerable to private feeling than were most magazines. Furthermore, Elizabeth Barrett writes in at least two letters that it was Dilke's specialty as a critic "to consign his most particular friends to the hangman,"[23] though this last statement is largely without foundation in fact. In accordance with his policy of delegating reviews of books to staff members not known to the authors of the books they were reviewing, Dilke rarely reviewed books of his friends at all, excepting perhaps, those of Hood and one or two others. On at least two occasions, however, Dilke may have written unfriendly reviews of books of his friends.[24] The first was the Polish Tales by Mrs. Gore, a rather popular romance writer of the time, who had temporarily turned from her medium of insipid novels to a more scholarly experiment in Continental works. Following the practice of the majority of Victorian writers in hinting for a favorable review, she unquestionably took advantage of Dilke's friendship by very subtle measures:

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[23] Letters, to Miss Mitford, I, p. 446.

[24] That is, if Charles Brown in 1835 can be called Dilke's friend. See Dilke-Brown-Keats controversy in the following chapter.

> I should feel greatly obliged if you would not notice it at all, unless, indeed, you find that it contains something demanding reprobation. As you may imagine there is something mysterious in this Medea-like proceeding towards my offspring, I ought to add that general commendation has rendered me somewhat ashamed of my sickly progeniture of fashionable novels, and that I have now in the press a series of stories founded on the history of Poland, which I hope will prove more worthy of attention.[25]

Mrs. Gore got her wish. Sir Charles Dilke reports that in a book review the "Polish tales were damned."[26]

The second of two reviews of Shakespeare's Autobiographical Sonnets by Charles Brown was unfavorable. Brown claimed that Shakespeare's sonnets, correctly arranged, provided a reasonably complete history of the poet's life. The theory was violently attacked by Dilke with the assistance of another reviewer in the Athenaeum by referring to Brown's volume as "a silly book."[27] Dilke made good his promise to his readers that regardless of its author or publisher, a good book would be referred to as a good book, while a bad one would be treated according to its deserts.

In the Athenaeum's fight for recognition as a truly independent journal, Dilke had to combat the practice of puffery, which had grown so entrenched that it was all but expected by the literary public. The situation was made

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[25]Dilke, Papers, I, pp. 34-35.

[26]Ibid., p. 35.

[27]Keats Circle, II, p. 33.

even more complicated for Dilke in that Henry Colburn, the most notorious of all puffing publishers, had owned a half interest in the magazine under the editorship of Buckingham. Evidence that Colburn's methods were known to all even in 1828 is afforded in Buckingham's assurance to the readers that no bookseller interference would be tolerated:

> Mr. Colburn has, in the most open and explicit manner, disclaimed all exercise of authority, or interference, even in the minutest particular, as to any matter connected with the Literary management of the Work; leaving to me the sole and undivided power of doing whatever I may think just in this respect.[28]

In justice to Colburn, it can be said that he never became affiliated with magazines for political reasons. He was, in fact, concerned solely with making money by paying or otherwise influencing editors for a friendly review of one of his books. In this practice he seems to have been quite successful. He owned stock in a number of puffing magazines, such as the New Monthly, the Court Journal, the United Service Journal, and the Literary Gazette, which claimed in 1830 to enjoy "by many thousands the greatest circulation of any purely literary paper."[29]

Colburn had no monopoly on puffery. Charges were hurled back and forth at various editors and booksellers, and it appears that only Colburn was insensible to their taunts.

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[28] Marchand, p. 102-103.

[29] Ibid., p. 103.

The several professedly independent magazines and their puffing publishers took great pains to give commendatory reviews of mediocre books. More than one of these "independent" editors who joined in righteous indignation at these practices were not wholly sincere. It is obvious that this duplicity greatly hampered Dilke's crusade in stamping out such unsavory practices.

The Athenaeum articles on puffery were slightly different from those in other magazines, in that those in the Athenaeum sounded more honest, sincere, and sensitive to the evil. Unquestionably, the Athenaeum attacks were more specific. With the aid of Reynolds and Picken, Dilke singled out individual publishers and individual magazines that puffed for these publishers and called them by name. The Athenaeum held it the duty of an independent journal to protect the unwary reader from the "arts of the insidious advertiser." Only a month after he had assumed editorship, Dilke levelled a barrage at the Literary Gazette, which had attacked Lamb's Album Verses only because, as Dilke stated, "the volume was published by Moxon and not by Colburn."[30] The New Monthly, the Literary Gazette, and the unethical practices of the publishing firm of Colburn and Bentley were largely the targets of the Athenaeum's attacks. At the same time, the Athenaeum professed itself careful to "call a good

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[30] Ibid., p. 125.

book a good book," regardless of its publisher. That the reviewers on Dilke's staff did in fact guard against favoritism towards books of other publishers is manifest in even a cursory examination of the Athenaeum. Because Dilke transferred most of the journal's strength from "original papers" to reviews of books, most of the books reviewed were those published by Colburn and Bentley. Of these far more are friendly than otherwise.

Even so, when the Athenaeum found evidence of puffery, it religiously and vociferously proclaimed it as such. A typical example of Dilke's methods may be observed from his review of Clarence: A Tale of Our Own Times, published by Colburn and Bentley, who had inserted advertisements and commendatory reviews in journals under their control:

> Will these deceptions "stretch out to the crack of doom"?--is there to be no end of them?--"another and a seventh"?--yet "another"?--nothing but falsehood's issue? --Nothing! and, backed by the Literary Gazette and half a dozen journals of their property, to say nothing of the whole press of England, their unwilling friends--but friends nevertheless, as all must know who know anything of the good service of advertisements to a periodical-- what need they care? the book is sold before the deception is known. "Clarence, a Tale of Our Own Times," will of course be supposed, by thousands, to have some reference to the life of a certain illustrious personage. No such thing--it has no imaginable connection--the name is an impudent imposition. Surely the very footmen and the ladies' maids, the most hungry after such anecdotes and slanders as the title promises, cannot be gulled and disappointed forever. Why "Clarence" is, in reality, a miserable clerk in an insurance-office, living somewhere in the back settlements of New York, who takes into his care and house a more miserable man than himself, a Mr. Flavel, who turns out to be his own father, and who, on his death-bed, informs his son that the real name of the

> family is neither Flavel nor Carroll, but Clarence . . . and this is sufficient for a title-page, and out comes "Clarence, a tale of our own Times!" It is no use wasting words on these shameless proceedings--we have here done our duty to the readers; and the public, who put their trust in paid puffs and title-pages, may buy the volumes.[31]

A few weeks later the Athenaeum levelled a double attack on publishers and titles; this particular review concerned Lady Charlotte Bury's Journal of the Heart, which was published, as most "sensational" volumes at that time were, by Colburn and Bentley. Aside from the evidence suggested by the Marked File, Dilke's authorship of the review is manifest in the peculiar humor and mock-serious attitude, in the penchant for quoting Shakespeare, and in the quiet and gentle digs at authors and readers who bare their pious and uninteresting souls to the public. In the course of the review Dilke speaks somewhat condescendingly of the "aristocratic authoress" and of her feeble claims to literary distinction:

> The piety indeed is sometimes a little too obtrusive, and occasionally assumes a sing-song tone in its redolency of common-place, which not even the pious who have any remains of taste can well bear; nevertheless, the little of the reflective and essayical which the volume contains, shows the authoress in a point of view so perfectly amiable, gentle, and benevolent, and, withal, so anxious to convey warning and instruction, that we, of the republic of letters, are almost in love with the aristocratic authoress, who, coming into that republic, shows so enthusiastic and self-humbling an affection for her species. . . .[32]

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[31] Athenaeum, August 7, 1830, p. 481.

[32] Ibid., August 21, 1830, p. 517.

The quiet allusion to the pious who have any "remains" of taste could not have escaped Dilke's more sophisticated readers, nor could his mock-enthusiasm of his "perfectly amiable, gentle, and benevolent" authoress.

Then dropping the playful and mock-serious tone to assume that of defender of good books, Dilke lashes out at the puffing practices of Colburn and Bentley:

> Ten thousand times more mischief is done by puffing and commendation than by all the weapons of ridicule that critic ever wielded. The slow ripening of genius--the indefatigable perseverance of learning, have no chance in this age, leaving literature to fight its own battles, good books would have their sale, and precedence, and honour--for honest men and honest critics would commend them; but what a publisher wants is commendation for his bad books.[33]

Then refreshing the reader on the Athenaeum's previous condemnation of the first volume of the Juvenile Library, Dilke says, assuming critics to be honest men:

> . . . Ridicule . . . would have consigned it, as we did, to the trunk-makers' and honesty would have recommended, as we did in the same number, Pryse Gordon's Memoirs, as a good gossiping entertaining volume, by the same publishers. Would Messrs. Colburn and Bentley thank us for this? Assuredly not. What they wanted was, commendation for the bad book and the costly speculation . . . it is in literature as it is in alms-giving, the good and deserving are robbed of that which is given to the idle and the unworthy. . . . A great deal more mischief is done by puffing and pampering imbecility than strangling a stray genius.[34]

In such manner the all-out fight against puffery was

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

carried on through almost successive numbers for years. Every conceivable method, every resource, apparently was employed to its fullest extent in stamping out this intolerable practice. The Athenaeum called attention to advertisements, notices, and sometimes reviews in other magazines of books that were not yet even published. The battle with the dragon of puffery was carried on throughout the 1830's, though repeated assurances, always premature, that the fight was won appeared from time to time in the pages of the Athenaeum. But by 1840 no reader of what was by then the nation's largest literary periodical could fail to be well informed concerning the vicious practice. Dilke's stubborn perseverance was rewarded by an increasing trust in and respect for the Athenaeum. He was as successful in exposing bookselling malpractices as he could reasonably expect to be. By 1850 puffing was the exception rather than the rule; a paid advertisement was labelled as such; a dishonest critic found it increasingly difficult to gain a few pounds on the side. The public was puff-conscious, and puffs were therefore less influential with the public.

Dilke carried on other projects and arguments, and espoused other causes during his period of editorship, as for example, the championing of the unstamped press, the fight for stronger copyright laws, and an attack on Miss Martineau's supernatural beliefs in hypnotism. But his

greater concern--that of establishing in the public mind the fact that the critic and his criticism must be free from all influences--was recognized and honored in his own day. In our day, journalism and criticism owe Dilke a great debt for proving that impartiality is possible.

CHAPTER IV

DILKE'S PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONTEMPORARIES

Dilke was on very friendly terms with a large number of literary men and women of his time. An interesting aspect of the Romantic period is the curious interrelationship between many of the major and minor figures. Starting with Byron and Shelley, one may trace intimate friendships through nearly all the men of letters of the second generation of Romantic writers as well as most of the first. The nucleus of these almost-phenomenal links is the so-called "Keats Circle," of which Dilke was one of the three or four most important members. It was through John Hamilton Reynolds, the man who was most responsible for the formation of the Keats Circle, that Dilke met Keats.[1] Dilke's close connections with this circle is important not only for his intimate friendship with the poet, but in his later relations with the surviving members of that group, most of whose names or signatures occur regularly after articles on the pages of the

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[1]Reynolds is ultimately responsible for introductions of Keats to Brown, Rice, Bailey, Taylor, and Hessey. It is not known how or when Dilke met Reynolds, but their friendship is known to have begun before 1817. Before this date Reynolds had shown great promise, had in fact been classed with Byron and Shelley as one of the greatest poets in England. Reynolds had met Keats probably through Hunt and Haydon.

London Magazine.

Sir Charles Dilke writes that his grandfather's "most affectionate friendship" was with Keats.[2] After Reynolds introduced Keats to Dilke, a meeting which probably took place no later than January or February, 1817, they quickly became intimate friends. In a short time the Wentworth house, as Dilke named it, became a social center for the Keats circle. The first mention of the Dilkes by Keats is in a letter to Reynolds, dated March 17, 1817. By September of that year, Keats had spent some days at the Wentworth home; and in a letter to the Reynolds sisters the tone of a passage wherein Keats jokes at the Dilkes' expense offers reasonably strong proof of their quickly ripening friendship:

> . . . tell Dilk /sic/ that it would be perhaps as well if he left a Pheasant or Partrige alive here and there to keep up a supply of Game for next season--tell him to rein in if possible all the Nimrod of his disposition, he being a mighty hunter befor(e) the Lord--of the Manor. Tell him to shoot far and not have at the poor devils in the furrow--when they are flying he may fire and nobody will be the wiser. Give my sincerest Respects to Mrs Dilk saying that I have not forgiven myself for not having got her the little Box of Medicine I promised her for her after dinner flushings--and that had I remained at Hampstead I would have made precious havoc with her house and furniture--drawn a great harrow over her garden--poisoned Boxer--eaten her Cloathes pegs,--fried her cabbages fricacced (how is it spelt?) her radishes--ragouted her Onions. . . .[3]

For half a page Keats tells how he would have harassed Mrs.

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[2]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 2.

[3]Letters, p. 42.

Dilke had he remained at Hampstead. A short time later Keats wrote to Dilke to request a copy of Sibylline Leaves; by December, 1818, probably less than a year after their first meeting, Keats apparently saw Dilke and Maria daily.

One important result growing out of Dilke's friendship with Keats is the theory of "negative capability," the desirable state of mind that is content with "not knowing." Unquestionably, many of their discussions centered on philosophy and aesthetics; it may be assumed that such discussions between the impressionable, idealistic Keats and the opinionated, logical Dilke usually got nowhere. It was Dilke, however, who in a negative manner motivated and ultimately convinced Keats of the value and necessity of "negative capability." In December, 1817, Keats writes to his brothers;

> I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke, on various subjects; several things dovetailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously--I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.[4]

Dilke naturally would have been unsympathetic to any theory that favored contentment with half knowledge. That he chose to disagree with Keats about the matter is quite understandable to all familiar with their attitudes of mind.

The theory of "negative capability" is essential to

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[4]Ibid., p. 71.

the main body of Keatsian aesthetics. Again and again Keats insists in so many words that a wearisome "striving after fact" is no way to arrive at truth. Dilke, says Keats, would never arrive "at a truth as long as he lives; because he is always trying at it."[5] The imagination arrives at truth intuitively, and that is what makes a thing of beauty a joy forever. According to Keats, one has merely to accept a thing of beauty as such; it will remain a thing of beauty without the help of aesthetic explanation or apology. Dilke, along with the majority of mankind, who are not gifted with a Keatsian imagination, must test the "truths" of beauty discursively, incapable of enjoying the spontaneous, intuitive qualities of the imagination. Dilke, who was a sound scholar and an outstanding exponent of hard-headed logic, was somewhat of an enigma to Keats. This striving after factual verification in Dilke, however, was largely responsible for crystallizing in Keats' mind the working thesis of negative capability.[6]

Early in 1818, the friendship continued to mellow. Keats writes to his brothers "I and Dilk are getting capital Friends--"[7] and "I am a good deal with Dilke and Brown, we are very thick; they are very kind to me. . . ."[8] A partial

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[5] Ibid., p. 426.

[6] See p. 75.

[7] Letters, p. 75.

[8] Ibid., p. 106.

glimpse of his indebtedness to Dilke is revealed from a passage in a letter to George and Tom, wherein he stated "I am in the habit of taking my papers /of the Endymion/ to Dilke's and copying there; so I chat and proceed at the same time."[9] During this time Keats was preparing copy of Endymion for publication, apparently doing most of his copying at Dilke's. At the beginning of May the poem was published, and Keats soon began to make plans with Brown for a walking tour of Scotland and Ireland. Beginning about this time, however, Keats was dogged by disappointment and misfortune of one kind or another. In July, he contracted a violent illness of throat ulcers, from which he never fully recovered; Brown wrote that Keats would have to return to London. To Dilke, however, fell the unpleasant task of informing Keats of his third brother Tom's illness, which task he performed when Keats arrived at Hampstead about the middle of August, in a physically depleted condition.

In September, Dilke received a letter from Keats, who was ill and who had "become worse after getting well."[10] But the close attachment and large philosophical and aesthetic deliberations between the two friends continued despite Keats' many troubles:[11]

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[9] Ibid., p. 88.

[10] Ibid., p. 215.

[11] At this time Lockhart violently attacked Keats'

> I have been over to Dilke's this evening, . . . there with Brown we have been talking of different and indifferent Matters--of Euclid, of Metaphisics of the Bible, of Shakespeare. . . .[12]

About this time Keats met Fanny Brawne and almost immediately fell in love. Dilke apparently thought well of Fanny, although he felt that their engagement was a "bad thing for them."[13] He and Maria realized Keats's and Fanny's reciprocal love and foresaw the impasse that was bound to come; hence, Dilke's pessimism.

The gradual realization of frustrated love and morbid premonitions of death most certainly had debilitative effects on the mind and personality of Keats.[14] During this period of despondency Keats made unkind remarks about certain of his friends, even though Dilke was spared Keats' most unfeeling condemnations. But these were the ravings of a sick man.

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poetry, political principles, and personal habits in the "Cockney School" articles in the Quarterly Magazine. Caring for his dying brother Tom aggravated his own illness to a great extent. Tom's death in December played no small part in forcing Keats' mind to dwell on thoughts entirely out of keeping with his nature.

[12]Letters, p. 237.

[13]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 11. Keats met Fanny at Dilke's home after he returned from his Scottish tour. They became engaged four months later.

[14]Although Keats appears to have remained friendly with Dilke until his death, at times he could not bear to "endure the society of any of those who used to meet at Elm Cottage and Wentworth Place" (Letters, p. 503). Keats made other unfeeling statements about his friend Brown, but at this period in his life Keats made many resolutions and contradicted himself a week later.

They were in no way indicative of the happy evenings spent at the Dilkes, copying Endymion and chatting, or meditating on Euclid, metaphysics, and negative capability, or fencing with Maria with celery stalks. These earlier days are significant of one of the warmest and most memorable friendships in the Keats circle and of Dilke's part in helping to shape Keats' aesthetics.

Dilke's associations with the Keats circle after the poet's death are important for the influence he exercised in both the welding together and the subsequent splitting asunder of the surviving membership. He was from the time of Keats' death in 1821 to Charles Brown's departure for Australia in 1841 at the very center of an explosive controversy concerning the disposition of various Keatsian relics. The controversy between Dilke and Brown stemmed largely from a disagreement over the finances of George Keats, the poet's younger brother. Brown charged that George had knowingly swindled his brother John out of a sum of money. Dilke's defense of George caused friends of the original circle to align themselves on one side or the other; as a result, long-lasting friendships were broken. But more important, both factions refused to surrender to any prospective biographer the literary remains of Keats for fear that George might be treated in a manner not to their liking. As long as Keats' friends were in disagreement as to George's relationships

with the poet, no biography of Keats could be written.

Dilke considered for a long while writing the Life of Keats himself. Many letters from 1824 to 1838 passed between Dilke and George Keats, who implored Dilke to undertake the "labor of love," as Dilke termed it. He was promised all assistance possible by George, Reynolds, and others. But his being unneutral thwarted the project and posed an insurmountable obstacle: the opposing factions would not surrender to him the unpublished works of Keats.

The argument between Dilke and Brown over George's finances lasted over a period of seventeen years. In 1824, George appealed to Dilke to convince Brown and Haslam, both of whom had for five years sent George taunting letters, that George was guiltless of any unfair financial transactions regarding his brother John's funds. Dilke sent the information to Brown in Italy, and two years later visited him, at which time Dilke left his son Wentworth under Brown's care for over two years. Brown must have realized Dilke's compliment in so doing. There, as Rollins suggests, Dilke and Brown discussed George's fate amicably.[15] But Brown in 1828 remained unconvinced of George's innocence, and the taunting letters continued to arrive at George's home in Louisville. Brown was determined that the world should know of George's duplicity. Dilke was equally concerned that his friend be

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[15] Keats Circle I, p. lxviii.

cleared of the gross charges made against him. From 1829 to 1833 Dilke and Brown exchanged insulting letters. Finally, Brown ceased all correspondence with Dilke and began to write a Memoir of Keats; whereupon George empowered Dilke to invoke copyright laws to prevent publication of Keats' material without Dilke's consent. With Dilke, therefore, rested the final decision as to who would be Keats' biographer.

Hampered as he was by the unavailability of Keats' unpublished works, Dilke could only join in the almost unanimous condemnation of the haphazard attempts of others to furnish a biography of Keats. He and other close friends of Keats had been shocked at the announcement by John Taylor in August, 1821, of a forthcoming biography so soon after Keats' death.[16] Steps were taken, notably by Dilke, Reynolds, and Brown, to prevent publication. In 1828, however, the bare outlines of Keats' life were published by Hunt in Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries and in The General Biographical Dictionary. Dilke was in complete sympathy with George's displeasure in Hunt's association of Keats with the so-called "Cockney School" of poets:

> Hunt's sketch is not altogether a failure but I should be extremely sorry that poor John's name should go down to posterity associated with the littleness of L. H., an association of which he was so impatient in his lifetime.

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[16]Severn, who had been with Keats at his death, was a close friend of John Taylor and had kept in touch with Keats' friends through him. Taylor asked Severn for Keats' papers, but Severn had judiciously forwarded his Keatsiana to Brown.

> He speaks of him patronizingly, that he would have defended him against the Reviewers if he had known his nervous irritation at their abuse of him; the fact was he more dreaded Hunt's defence than their abuse--You know all this as well as I do. . . .[17]

And in a letter to Dilke, Brown derides Hunt for making Keats a "whining, puling boy."[18]

Because George empowered Dilke to invoke powers of copyright to prevent publication of Keats material without Dilke's consent, it was not until 1846, twenty-five years after Keats' death, that Richard Milnes was finally approved as a suitable biographer by all factions. He was an outsider to whom each member could in good conscience surrender valuable Keatsian relics. However, during the previous decade, Brown had, after many false starts, completed a brief Memoir of Keats. Correct in feeling that a life without the poems is of merely nominal value, Brown had passed his memoir around in manuscript. It was circulated and lauded for some time until Severn sent it to Dilke in 1841, after its author had emigrated to Australia. Dilke was thoroughly dissatisfied with Brown's representation. The criticisms he sent to Severn were unsparing in their destructiveness of Brown's version of Brown's and Keats' relationship, and Brown's dishonesty in this regard probably irritated Dilke more than any

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[17]Keats Circle, I, p. 313.

[18]Charles Brown, Life of John Keats, ed. Dorothy Bodurtha and Willard Pope (London, New York, and Toronto, 1937), pp. 9-10.

other single aspect about the memoir. His expose was damaging to Brown in that it showed clearly that the latter attempted to establish himself in importance far above that of Keats' other friends. It shows, too, that Brown was not truly magnanimous during Keats' most destitute period; in fact he charged him for room and board. Finally, Dilke shows Brown sacrificing sound scholarship for personal glory.[19]

In 1846, having secured Dilke's blessing, Milnes, later Lord Houghton, was industriously gathering materials for the proposed Life of Keats. He was Brown's happy choice for a biographer. Prior to his departure for Australia in 1841, Brown had relinquished to Milnes all Keats' unpublished material in his possession. Formerly a Cambridge Apostle and a poet himself, Milnes was a great admirer of Keats, though he had not known him personally.[20]

Dilke was pleased with Milnes as a biographer and helped him with "letters and remembrances," dates, locations of published and unpublished poems, and anecdotes. In relinquishing his own Keatsiana to Milnes in 1846, Dilke expressed

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[19]See Keats Circle, II, pp. 103-106.

[20]George died without hope of ever finding a suitable biographer to perpetuate his brother's name, and, without knowing any more of Milnes than that he was a friend to Brown, probably would never have relinquished John's works to that biographer. But John Jeffrey, who married Georgianna after George's death, was contented with the choice, provided that any profits, if relinquished by Milnes, should revert to the children of George.

his own satisfaction that Milnes had rid himself of "poor Brown's prejudices:"

> When I lived at Hampstead Keats was at my house generally half a dozen times a week, so that few letters passed. I have added a few of George's which throw a light on character. These I would not have entrusted to any one who had not got rid of poor Browns prejudices--for George in his admissions to a friend & his desire to state the whole truth, does not do justice to his own case, as I could prove. I have numberless others from George but relating to the private affairs of the family & the Settlement with his Sister, whose Trustee I am.[21]

In December, 1846, Dilke persuaded Reynolds, the last of the circle of friends to be so convinced, that Milnes was a suitable biographer.

In August, 1848, the first full-length biography and poetical works of Keats was published. Milnes was praised from every side for his diligent research and handling of difficult matters. Even Keats' friends were well satisfied with his representation, and nearly every one of them wrote letters of congratulation and gratitude. It appears that Dilke, however, was one of the least enthusiastic of that group of friends. His annotations in Milnes' Life of Keats show that he was more than once irritated at the treatment of various details concerning the relationships of friends within the circle.[22] However, the two Athenaeum reviews, at

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[21] Keats Circle, II, p. 161.

[22] His incisive notes and comments lead Rollins to believe that "he could have done an infinitely better job than Milnes" and that he was the member of the circle "best fitted to give an accurate, factual biography." (Ibid. I, p. lxxxv.)

least the second of which Dilke probably wrote, were favorable.[23] His letter to Milnes, on the other hand, was not without overtones of regret. Although few others of the group of friends speak of errors at all, Dilke complained of at least three: Bailey, whom Milnes had quietly buried in 1821, was still living; and John and not George was the eldest of the brothers. But probably the greatest cause for Dilke's coolness was the treatment of George. Milnes had evidently absorbed enough of Brown's prejudices to assume that John, with or without good reason, had been annoyed with George over finances. Dilke and Reynolds would not concede this point at all. Milnes struck what he thought was a happy compromise and was willing to assume no ulterior motives in George, but felt that John was careless about money matters. Dilke in a letter to Milnes hints already of a second edition wherein the truth shall be made known:

> . . . I am sure you meant to be not only just but kind. But poor George is, it appears, dead, and I am only the more anxious that the truth & the truth only should be told of him. You must equally desire it--and therefore, on the chance of a second edition, I will express a wish that you would, some leisure morning, put down in black & white, John's known & unavoidable expenditure, & then tell me what was the possible 'remainder' in Decr 1819 or Jany 1820 from which George could have taken any thing.[24]

Dilke's numerous notes in Milnes' Life of Keats evince his recognition of Brown's penchant for assuming the

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[23] Athenaeum, August 12 and 19, 1848, pp. 789-791; 824-827.

[24] Keats Circle, II, p. 250.

role of magnanimous patron and father-confessor. One such instance of Brown's influence is to be found in a passage in Milnes wrongly implying that Brown intended to follow Keats and remain with him in Italy. Opposite this passage Dilke writes in obvious disgust: "This Mr Milnes must have stated on the authority of Brown and no other--What are the facts? Keats embarked in Septr 1820 & Brown was then in the River /The Thames/[25]--Keats died Feby 1821 and Brown started for Italy in July or August 1822! fifteen or sixteen months after he was dead!"[26] Dilke, then, was not pleased with the treatment of George nor with Brown's influence over Milnes. But his total impression may have been prejudiced by the first statement in Milnes' preface:

> It is now fifteen years ago that I met . . . Mr. Charles Brown, a retired Russia-merchant, with whose name I was already familiar as the generous protector and devoted friend of the poet Keats.[27]

The words "generous protector" aroused Dilke's wrath. He proceeded to write the greatest tribute ever paid to Brown, remarkable for its detachment and fairness, in view of what had passed between them:

> What Mr. Milnes means by a "generous protector" I know

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[25]Unknown to either of them at the time, Keats and Brown had been on ships that docked side by side as Keats was leaving England.

[26]In Dilke's annotated copy of Milnes' Life of Keats.

[27]Richard M. Milnes, Life of Keats (New York, 1848), p. 5.

> not--assuredly it had nothing to do with money. When John Keats died Brown sent in an account to George for Board, Money lent, & interest amounting to about 72 pounds--which by George's order I paid. Neither Mr Milnes nor his distinguished crack-brained friend of Fiesole, /Walter Savage Landor/ knew any thing about Brown--They were not sufficiently on an equality to penetrate the heart of his mystery. If it were to the purpose, I could here write down a character of Brown, that would be greatly to his honor--though there would be nothing in it abt the retired Russia Merchant or the generous protector. I saw him under all varieties of fortune, they under only one, of moderate, very moderate, independence. He was the most scrupulously honest man I ever knew--but wanted nobleness to life this honesty out of the commercial kennel. He would have forgiven John what he owed him with all his heart--but had John been able and offered to pay, he would have charged interest, as he did to George. He could do generous things too--but not after the fashion of the world and therefore they were not appreciated by the world. His sense of justice led him at times to do acts of generosity--at others of meanness--the latter was always noticed, the former overlooked--therefore amongst his early companions he had a character for anything rather than liberality--but he was liberal.[28]

It is evident that Dilke was not entirely pleased with Milnes' biography of Keats, nor with the biographer. Dilke's demands for honesty and accurate representation of incidents and relationships in the life of Keats foreshadow his concern with detail and factual data in his eighteenth century critical studies, which followed later.

The majority of Dilke's early acquaintances were made through his connections with the London Magazine. His essays appear from time to time competing for space alongside articles by "Elia" or "X.Y.Z." Since paths crossed often in this

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[28] In Dilke's copy of Milnes.

talented company, Dilke's relationship with this journal gave him a splendid opportunity to know the foremost writers of his time.

John Scott, a fiery liberal, established the London Magazine in 1820. While it purported to be above purely political considerations, this periodical drew young liberal enthusiasts to its support. It held almost exclusive printing privileges over the works of Hazlitt, Reynolds, Lamb, De Quincey, Hood, Cunningham, Hartley Coleridge, and others slightly less well known. After Christie killed Scott, the editor, in a duel in February, 1821, Taylor and Hessey, friends and publishers of Keats, became proprietors of the magazine with Taylor as editor and Hood, Hessey's friend, as "sub-editor." Dilke was probably a frequent contributor by this time.

In 1824, Taylor resigned from editorship of the London Magazine. Henry Southern became editor about the middle of the following year. Sir Charles Dilke suggests that his grandfather may have edited the journal in late 1824 and early 1825. That the editor was Dilke is a plausible guess, but a number of other persons connected with the magazine were as well qualified as he. Dilke continued to write for the journal under Southern, as did a number of his friends.

After the Athenaeum made its faltering starts in 1828-1829, the ghost of the old London Magazine began to stir

again in the Athenaeum. Reynolds, Hood, and perhaps Lamb and others joined with Dilke to become proprietors of the new magazine. Those personal relationships that Dilke developed as a result of his connection with the old London Magazine, then, were with Cunningham, Hood, Hazlitt, and Lamb. Details concerning his daily intercourse with Hazlitt, Lamb, and other figures of less note are unfortunately lacking. But these intelligent, enthusiastic men who engaged in similar interests and who met frequently in familiar surroundings over a period of ten years, undoubtedly came to know one another well.

Thomas Hood was one of the London Magazine luminaries, and yet he somehow managed to remain outside the circumference of the Keats circle. Probably owing to his entry into the world of letters late in life, Hood seemed to have joined that circle only after Keats' death. He was well known, however, to Hessey (of Taylor and Hessey, publishers and befrienders of Keats), who on his return from Scotland, where he was sent for his health two years earlier, engaged him as sub-editor of the London Magazine in February, 1821, the month of Keats' death. Hood's friendship with Dilke began sometime after 1821, according to Hood's son, but Sir Charles Dilke places their first acquaintance earlier in 1816.[29]

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[29]See Memorials of Thomas Hood, ed. Frances Broderip and Thomas Hood, Jr., 2 Vols. (Boston, 1860), I, p. 10; Dilke, Papers, I, p. 54.

The relationship between Dilke and Hood does not appear to be intimate until 1830. When Dilke gained financial control and editorship of the Athenaeum, Hood and Reynolds still owned stock and were therefore justified in expressing grave concern over Dilke's proposition to lower the price per issue to one-half its original cost.[30]

Dilke appreciated Hood's wit, for which the latter was noted. Hood had a special weakness for practical jokes, directed chiefly at his forgiving wife,[31] but aimed occasionally at some friend. In 1833, Mrs. Dilke received this bit of startling intelligence:

> Madam,
> By having seen some Benevolent recum mendations in the Athenium and supposing their by the Editor too be humain disposed and Having no othe Means of Publishing my own case which is as follows I humbly Beg leav to say I am left with Eleven offspring the yungest off whom But a munth old none so Much as taste Butchers Meat and nothing in the World to lay on xcept straw winter and summer owing to my Family am unabel to get or do ether nedle work or charing and there father am sorry to say not willing if he could get work but peple wont employ Him on account of caracter to Be sure he was Born to verry different Prospects in life my mane object being to get sum of the children of my hands am intending to send one up to you by the Saturdays carryer hoping you will excuse the offence and if approved of god willing may be the Means of getting him into sum sittiation in London witch is verry scarse hearabouts and the Allmity Bless and prosper you for such and as the well noon gudness of Hart of you and Mr. Dilke will I trust exert in

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[30] Marchand, p. 35.

[31] Hood's wife was one of the two Reynolds sisters with whom Maria Dilke quarreled concerning Jane's (Hood's wife) and Marianne's bad opinion of Fanny Brawne. (See Letters of Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats, ed. Edgcumbe, 1937, p. 82.)

> Behalf of our deplorible states and am begging your Humbel pardin for trubling with the distresses of a Stranger But not to your gudness your humbel servant LP.[32]

Sir Charles Dilke explains that "The next morning there came by carrier's cart a suckling pig from Hood, of which this had been the "envoi."[33]

The period of Dilke's warmest friendship with Hood came shortly before Hood removed himself and family from England to Germany. Because of the failure of a firm,[34] Hood had in 1834 become involved in financial difficulties. He determined not to avoid his responsibilities to his creditors by declaring bankruptcy. Accordingly, on Dilke's advice, he left England for the continent, where living was much cheaper. At Dilke's suggestion, he settled in a beautiful villa on the Rhine at Coblenz. Prior to his departure, he and Dilke planned every detail of life in Germany, even down to such routine as walking tours for Hood's health.

Just before Hood left England, a serious rift developed between the Reynolds and the Hood families. Some idea may be formed of Hood's close attachment to Dilke from one of Hood's letters just prior to his departure for Coblenz. This letter indicates that Dilke's character was such that friends felt free to confide in him. From all indications, it appears

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[32]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 39.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Probably a publishing firm.

that Hood's wrath was directed at Marian and Charlotte, the two sisters of Hood's wife, Jane, and the husband of the former, Mr. Green.[35] Jane had become critically ill just before she and Hood were to leave England. It is certain that these three made injudicious and unfeeling comments about the approaching death of Jane, not only to Hood, but to her. Hood writes in a rage to Dilke about their astounding behavior and complains of some of their statements:

> What think you of such infernal sentiments as follow . . . Lotte said to me "I hope she will wake sensible, & then pass away quietly." And . . . "What gave her horror was, that if Jane had been let alone she would have died days ago!" Damn such pestilental sensibility--Does she want a dead sister to cry over, let her give her good wishes to Marian.[36]

Hood confides to Dilke that Jane was visibly shaken by her unfeeling sisters: "Think me not mad, my dear Dilke, but I am writing of things words cannot reach. Horrors, horrible, most horrible, must have been her portion."[37] Hood had, as a consequence, thrown his relatives out of the house. He

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[35]Again, details of the quarrel are omitted in the Memorials; the editors are willing to allow but two bare hints that any disharmony at all troubled this domestic circle. (See pp. 10-11 and 17.) But by the editors' own admission, amiable John Reynolds took Hood to his heart and must have been proud of his illustrious and urbane brother-in-law. Evidence is lacking to affirm that Hood's feud with his in-laws extended to Reynolds.

[36]Letters of Hood, ed. Leslie A. Marshand (New Brunswick, 1945), p. 27.

[37]Jane recovered, however, and in April, 1835, Hood departed from England for Coblenz ahead of Jane and their two children, who arrived shortly afterwards.

therefore had to write this letter to Dilke to unburden his mind.[38] This, then, is a significant letter, especially as it comes from one of Hood's temperament, and reveals the close attachment between him and Dilke.

In the next two years Hood writes many letters to Dilke, each with literally a score of pages but important only insofar as they reveal Hood's antipathy to the "dishonest" Germans, his penchant for punning, and his sense of obligation to Dilke, whom he repeatedly calls his "best friend." A section of one letter in 1835 to Maria contains a homey and ridiculously accurate portrait of Dilke:

> "Upon my soul, Maria, this is a delightful place! So like Coblenz! So you call this Margate, do you, my beauty? Well--" (a grunt like a paviour's) "and I suppose you call that the fort--humph! Considering we might have stood before Ehrenbreitstein instead of it--hah!" (a sigh like an alligator's). "My God!--that we could be so insane!--how any Christian being could stay a month in it!--why I should hang myself in ten days, or drown myself in that stinking sea yonder! There is not one thing worth looking at--not one! I know what you are going to say, Beauty; but because the Crosbys and the Chatfields are such donkeys, and the Lord knows who besides, is it any reason because they don't act like common rational beings--? But come along!" (no offer to stir though) "let's go up to the market and look at the fish, for I suppose you know there is none to be had here, because it is so near the coast. To be sure, says you, there is whiting--and so there is at Billingsgate! If ever I go again to a watering-place--I believe that's what you call it, Maria--it shall be Hungerford Market. My God! it is a madness--a perfect madness--to leave home and come down here to see--what? a parcel of yellow slippers and pepper-and-salt dressing-gowns." Here he draws down his mouth, and hoists up his shoulders, till his coat-collar hides his ears. "Well, it's too late now

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[38] See Ibid., pp. 18-19.

> to listen to common sense. It serves me right for being such an ass. By the time my holidays are over, I shall know how to spend them! But perhaps you like it better than I do, for there's no disputing of tastes."[39]

In September, 1836, the Dilkes visited Coblenz, but the eagerly awaited visit with Hood was disappointing in that Dilke was too ill to talk, and before he recovered Hood had to accompany an army regiment to Berlin. The Dilkes had left for England before he returned. In the following year the Hoods moved to Ostend, Belgium, and again were hosts to the Dilkes.

From 1835 Hood had been much handicapped by ill health; instead of improving, he had suffered a gradual decline, though he completed with regularity his Comic Annual from 1830 to 1838. He regularly dispatched long, witty letters to Dilke, who, when he replied at all, answered in very brief epistles. But in spite of his failure to answer Hood's letters, Dilke came to be regarded as Hood's "dearest friend." Hood complains to Maria about Dilke's poor writing habits:

> I write to you instead of the D_____ because I am sick of him as a correspondent; as a countryman of Taylor's said, "who would go out with a fellow, that when you fire at him with a blunderbuss only returns it with a pocket-pistol?" Even so have I sent Dilke huge letters full and crossed, enough to drive him blind and stupid, and give him a chronic headache; and what does he send in answer but a little letteret that cannot do anybody any harm? I suppose some day I shall come to, "T. H. is received" the fag end of the Athenaeum, amidst the

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[39] Memorials, I, p. 112-113.

miscalled Answers to Correspondents.[40]
Hood understood Dilke's time-consuming job as editor, however, and thoughtfully excused him for his bad habits.

Dilke received from Hood while he was abroad several articles for the Athenaeum, the most important of which are those on "Copyright and Copywrong," which had considerable influence in the passage of copyright laws.[41] Shortly after his return with his family to England in 1840 Hood succeeded Theodore Hook as editor of the New Monthly Magazine. Although this position made Hood and Dilke business rivals, the friendship continued as before. In 1842, Dilke entertained Hood at his summer house at Twickinham, and Hood in turn invited the Dilkes and Dickens to dinner. Dilke received from Hood helpful suggestions and research for some of Dilke's articles in the Athenaeum.[42] Dilke lost his closest friend when Hood died in 1845 after a lingering illness. He was still destitute, but he was known and loved by every lover of wit and humor.

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[40]Ibid., p. 98. See Athenaeum, January 28, 1837, p. 68, where Dilke acknowledges receipt of one of George Keats' letters: "G.K., of Louisville, received, and shall be attended to."

[41]See Marchand, Mirror, pp. 69-70.

[42]See Dilke's cutting satire in an article in the Athenaeum (February 25, 1843, pp. 178-179), wherein he points out cases of gross plagiarism in Lord Lennox's Tuft Hunter. Although Hood was editor of the rival magazine The New Monthly at that time, Hood had assisted Dilke in collecting evidence to support Dilke's charge of plagiarism.

Although the associations with Keats and Hood represented Dilke's warmest friendships with important men of letters, other illustrious personages are numbered among his acquaintances: Charles Lamb, Allen Cunningham, Charles Dickens, William M. Thackeray, Walter Savage Landor, and Elizabeth and Robert Browning. Sir Charles Dilke, who was living with his grandfather at the age of nine, tells of various guests in the 1850's who visited Dilke at 76 Sloane St. The grandson had memories of ". . . Thackeray's tall stooping figure, of Dickens's goatee . . . of Browning, then known as 'Mrs. Browning's husband'."[43]

Nothing is known of Browning's friendship with Dilke, and very little about Thackeray's.[44] Elizabeth Browning, however, knew Dilke other than in his professional capacity as editor of the Athenaeum, and her letters reveal eulogies of Dilke as a brilliant editor:

> . . . For the 'Athenaeum,' I have always held it as a journal, first--in the very first rank--both in ability and integrity; and knowing Mr. Dilke is the 'Athenaeum,' I could make no mistake in my estimation of himself.[45]

Later, in a statement more poetic than logical, she commends Dilke as a "Brutus in criticism."[46] Prior to this Mrs.

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[43]Gwynn and Tuckwell I, p. 17.

[44]He and Dilke dined together at Thackeray's home in May, 1856.

[45]Letter to Mrs. Jameson; Letters, I, p. 277.

[46]Ibid., p. 446.

Browning had carried on a professional correspondence with Dilke about a series of articles which she contributed to the Athenaeum on the Christian Greek poets.[47] In his letters to her Dilke stipulated only, in accordance with his neutral policies on religious and political matters, that she "stay away from theology."

Haydon, the painter and friend of Keats, was another correspondent with Dilke, their period of closest friendship being apparently 1841, when Haydon wrote letters to Dilke explaining some experiments he was conducting in oils. William Blake, of whose paintings Dilke possessed nearly a complete collection and of whose poetry he was one of the earliest admirers, is also mentioned as a friend,[48] as was Leigh Hunt, who spoke kindly of Dilke's readiness to help others in distress.[49]

When Dilke visited the continent in 1829, he saw Walter Savage Landor frequently, and tells of demonstrating to Landor the errors contained in one of the latter's impetuous and unsagacious letters to the Grand Duke of Tuscany:

> In the midst of this I proved that the accusation contained in his /Landor's/ message was an error. I ran to him, and in two words gave my proof, when he stared, and said: "Then I am bound, as a gentleman, to write

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[47] Athenaeum, June 4, 11, 25, August 6, 13, 1842.

[48] Dilke, Papers, I, p. 51.

[49] Autobiography of Leigh Hunt, ed. R. Ingpen, 2 Vols. (Westminster, 1903), II, p. 40.

> and beg his /Grand Duke of Tuscany's/ pardon," which he did in ten minutes.[50]

Landor's impetuosity and childishness is admitted by all biographers, and while Dilke appears to have thought well of Landor personally, he is not be be censured for his forthright honesty in later referring to Landor as "crackbrained."[51]

Allan Cunningham was a frequent contributor to the Athenaeum and sent Dilke notes almost daily. In one of these messages Cunningham confesses the respect he held for Dilke:

> My connection with the Athenaeum is well known, and I have made no secret of it, but I am prouder of the avowed hearty friendship of its downright honest and worthy editor.[52]

Charles Lamb contributed to the Athenaeum and asked in return ". . . the loan of some books. Do not fear sending too many. But do not if it be irksome to yourself,--such as shall make you say, 'damn it, here's Lamb's box come again. . . .' Any light stuff; no natural history or useful learning, such as Pyramids, Catacombs, Giraffes, Adventures in Southern Africa. . . ."[53] The friendly, intimate tone of this passage

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[50]Dilke, Papers, I, pp. 19-20; apparently the main causes of Landor's strife with the authorities were libelous expressions and anecdotes (of Florentine society), which anecdotes he had inserted in some of Imaginary Conversations, and a letter he had sent to the Grand Duke falsely accusing a high official of whistling at Mrs. Landor in the street; (See Sidney Colvin, Landor /London and New York, 1888/, p. 126).

[51]In Dilke's annotated copy of Milnes.

[52]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 28.

[53]Ibid., p. 27.

reflects the warmth of friendship which lasted for fifteen years.

A lifelong friend to Dilke was Charles Dickens. Charles Wentworth Dilke I, the editor's father, had worked in the same office with Dickens' father, and was a friend of the family. Dilke's relationship with Dickens is, however, remembered mainly from their frequent intercourse in their professional careers. They worked together on the Daily News staff until Dilke resigned to be succeeded by Dickens. Earlier, in 1842, the Dilke and Dickens families were guests of Hood. Later, in 1858, together with the historian Forster, they were again united in calling for reform in the Literary Fund. Letters of a conversational nature passed back and forth during the interim.

Dilke's many professional and personal relationships with his contemporaries are by no means unique for the nineteenth century. The catholicity and versatility of the age fostered frequent intercourse between men interested in all the arts; as a consequence, men of letters, music, and even science tended to gravitate together to form a coterie of artistic-tempered enthusiasts. Their influences on one another can only be estimated, but such estimates are likely to be too little rather than too much. It has been noted earlier that Dilke's influence on Keats may well have been

the impetus to Keats' theory of negative capability.[54] What might have been the public's first estimation of Keats had not Dilke stopped publication of Brown's Memoir is not pleasant to contemplate. Dilke's encouragement to Hood in his illness may have made a vast difference in the quantity of volumes this author produced. In Hood's own opinion the care Dilke exercised in arranging living quarters and prescribing means to restore his health probably lengthened Hood's life for some years. The number of books he borrowed from Dilke's library of 12,000 volumes should be considered in assessing the indirect influence upon Lamb's works. Dinner engagements with Thackeray, Dickens, the Brownings, as well as confidential advice to Landor and laudatory remarks from such figures as Hunt and Cunningham all indicate that Dilke was stimulating and that his society was sought after. He must have had something interesting to say, and his influence must have been extensive. In estimating Dilke's influence over his contemporaries, the not inconsiderable authority he maintained in the world of letters as editor of England's leading literary journal is far-reaching. But even if all these influences were discounted, and even if he had contributed nothing to literary history, Dilke, as much as Crabb Robinson, would be remembered for the company he kept.

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[54] See Letters, p. 71.

CHAPTER V

DILKE ON EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP

Dilke had been characterized by Keats as a "Godwin Perfectibility Man," one "who cannot feel he has a personal identity unless he has made up his Mind about every thing."[1] By this Keats probably meant that Dilke had little trace of an imaginative mind such as his own, but rather one which had to deal with subject matter replete with hard fact. Throughout his writings Dilke asks the question "What are the facts?" If he was deficient in matters of the imagination when compared with Keats, Dilke was at least more than adequately endowed with the art of marshalling, selecting, organizing, and presenting facts.

Dilke's method of presenting an array of logical, factual detail in order to establish an irrefutable critical position is nowhere put to more effective use than in his attempt to identify the authors of certain anonymous eighteenth century writings. Because many eighteenth century authors had been erroneously credited with works of unknown authorship, Dilke's position as editor and literary critic necessitated his identification of certain letters,

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[1] Letters, pp. 234 and 425.

articles, books, and pamphlets attributed to Jonathan Swift and Junius in a much needed attempt to correct the inaccurate assumptions of early nineteenth century biographers.

Moreover, Dilke's application of detailed, factual scholarship is responsible for a sizeable quantity of biographical scholarship concerning the dishonesty, duplicity, or other misrepresentation of fact and history in the private lives of Edmund Burke and Alexander Pope. Dilke felt, moreover, that certain eighteenth century men and women in high places had been the unjust victims of character assassination at the hands of unprincipled opportunists. He therefore broke many a lance in defense of such individuals, notably, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, John Wilkes, and Pope.

From 1848 to 1862, Dilke contributed to the Athenaeum and Notes and Queries a series of articles purporting to establish the authorship of various letters, books, and pamphlets. He was especially interested in settling the disputed works relative to Swift and Junius. In the series dealing with Swift, Dilke was concerned primarily with establishing which of several obscure tracts were actually Swift's.

In 1711, Swift had written The Conduct of the Allies, a highly controversial tract that had infuriated certain Tory Lords and Commons. Ostensibly, Swift wanted to demonstrate in this tract only that continuation of the war

against the Dutch was futile; that special interests, notably the Whig stockjobbers and a few aristocratic families, were benefitting from such a continuation to the detriment of the rest of the country; and that the English were being exploited by the Dutch.[2] In the course of his argument in this pamphlet Swift had at one point made several observations which were actually of minor importance to his argument but which were regarded as treasonable by his opposition. In defense of this particular passage, perhaps also to forestall more criticism that would doubtless place in jeopardy some of the more important issues in the tract, Swift issued the Remarks on the Barrier Treaty, wherein he amplified and defended his previous arguments for ceasing the war with the Dutch. Whether this tract occasioned further strife or whether some anonymous writer felt that Swift did not do justice to his cause is unknown, but for some reason the tract Remarks on the Barrier Treaty Vindicated was subsequently published.

Dilke in the first of a series of articles on the subject argues that the author was Bolingbroke, Secretary of State under Queen Anne. In the introduction of his article Dilke dismisses Swift, to whom it had been ascribed, from authorship:

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[2]Stephen Gwynn, Life and Friendships of Dean Swift (New York, 1933), p. 169.

> Presumptively it was not written by Swift; for, with all his strange odd fancies, I cannot believe that he would have addressed a letter to himself by way of vindicating himself. The fact was open to misconstruction--might have become known, and been used as a weapon of offence against him.[3]

Furthermore, Dilke claims that the tract was not written in the style of Swift. Though evidently composed by an author of great ability, the work contains none of Swift's colloquial passages or occasional outbursts of contempt for the opposition.[4] But Dilke denies Swift's authorship not on style but on the affinity of this tract with Bolingbroke's known political opinions. Dilke admits the weakness of his own logic in ascribing authorship to Bolingbroke, but he contends that, weak as it is, it is yet stronger than any other possibility. He closes with the observation that although the authorship of the tract is a matter of great importance, interest of an even "higher character" is afforded in the revelation of the "moral bewilderment of those ticklish times."

In another article Dilke advances his reasons for assigning Steele as the author of Essays: Divine, Moral, and Political, by the Author of Tale of a Tub.[5] Dilke postulates that the author was not Swift. Aside from a

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[3]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 361.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Notes and Queries, March 13, 1858, pp. 206-207.

cynical tone throughout the essays on such sacred topics as friendship, virtue, and religion--a tone not even Swift would honor with his name--the book abounds in gross charges against Swift himself. In support of his contention that Steele was the author, Dilke calls attention to the Swift-Steele friendship to 1713 and to their subsequent enmity; to the mild attacks in the Guardian that alone do not justify such enmity; to the many references--all sympathetic--to Steele in the volume in question; and finally, to the revelation of certain aspects of their friendship that only Steele could know.

In the last of these articles on Swift, Dilke suggests that the Miscellaneous Works of Dr. William Wagstaffe was the work of Swift.[6] He demonstrates the lack of authority for assuming the work to be that of a real Dr. Wagstaff,[7] an obscure physician whose scant records indicate little trace of literary tendency. After a search in the British Museum, Dilke declares that the only publication by the real Dr. Wagstaff is A Letter to Dr. Friend Showing the Danger and Uncertainty of Inoculating for the Smallpox.[8] On the other hand, the Miscellaneous Works were collected, so states the memoir to the book, by Dr. Wagstaffe's "friend." Thus,

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[6]Ibid., May 17, 1862, pp. 381-384.

[7]Dilke does not comment on the difference in spelling.

[8]Ibid., p. 383.

not only was the writer of the memoir unknown, but also the collector was anonymous. Dilke found the distinguishing characteristics of the Wagstaffe Miscellanies to be attacks on Steele. Furthermore, the publisher of the Miscellanies was Morphew, Swift's publisher, and not Butler, who published Wagstaff's Letter on Smallpox. Additional evidence of Swift's authorship is afforded in a letter from Pope, who refers to the pamphlet Dr. Andrew Tripe, generally ascribed to Swift, as one of Dr. Wagstaffe's. Finally, Dilke calls attention to the similarity of the pseudonyms "William Wagstaffe" and "Isaac Bickerstaff" and other "Staffs" Swift and Steele were known to affect. To ascertain that Wagstaffe was truly one of the family of "Staffs," Dilke points out that Swift published his own Polite Conversations under the name of "Simon Wagstaff."[9]

Probably the most important of Dilke's eighteenth century writings and the ones on which he spared neither time nor energy in gathering the data are his articles on the authorship of the Junius Letters. The extent to which Dilke's contributions have become regarded as authoritative may be seen from the fact that Bredvold, Mc Killop, and

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[9]Present editors make no mention of Swift in connection with the unknown authorship of either the Miscellaneous Works of Dr. William Wagstaffe or the Polite Conversations.

Whitney[10] list Papers of a Critic as presumably the best work of a critical nature dealing with the Junius Letters Controversy. In A Junius Bibliography (1949) by Francesco Cordasco, who is perhaps the current authority on Junius studies, the name of Charles Wentworth Dilke occurs more frequently than that of any other critic. Here, too, Dilke's main contribution to the Junius controversy was the identification of the authorship of various letters wrongly attributed to Junius.

Comparatively speaking, Dilke began his Junius studies early. In 1848, while he was still active in public life, he contributed an article to the Athenaeum challenging Mr. Britton's theory that Colonel Barré was Junius.[11] Britton, following the unknown editor of the edition of the Junius letters published in 1812, though prepared by Dr. Good, added about one hundred letters to the sixty known to have been written by Junius. From this collection Britton attempted to prove by analogy that Barré was Junius. Dilke introduced his argument against Britton by stating that it is "high time that the question as to the authenticity of the Letters first introduced into the edition of 1812 as those of Junius should be examined."[12] After quoting from

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[10]Editors of the anthology Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose (New York, 1939).

[11]Athenaeum, July 22, 1848, pp. 717-719.

[12]Ibid., p. 718.

the 1812 edition preface wherein Dr. Good "justifies" the additional one hundred letters on the basis of "a thorough knowledge of our author's style," Dilke claims that Dr. Good transferred just what he pleased into his collections as "the miscellaneous letters of Junius," so that "the extent of his temerity passes all belief."[13] Dilke challenges the authenticity of certain letters in Good's edition for various reasons: some are not consistent with Junius' known political views; some attacked personages of whom Junius spoke well, while other letters lauded those whom Junius consistently attacked; some written under the signature of "Atticus" were included, while others under the same signature were not; and all the letters signed "C" Dilke held suspect because one of them attacked Wilkes, with whom Junius was on friendly terms. As to Britton's knowledge of Junius' style, Dilke has this to say:

> As to the question of "style," with all deference to Dr. Good, we have no absolute faith either in his judgment or in our own,--seeing how blindly others have stumbled. Every age has its style--its style of writing and of handwriting. As we said before, there have been some thirty different persons fixed on as the writer of "Junius's Letters,"--thirty persons, therefore, whose "style," (as well as handwriting) in the opinion of some one or other, or of many, was the style of Junius. Twenty-nine of those--good, confident critics--must have been wrongly assigned--perhaps the whole thirty![14]

Since, as Dilke was first to demonstrate, the case for the

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., July 29, 1848, p. 746.

Barré authorship depended on the authenticity of those questionable letters, Britton's argument was considerably weakened.

Another claimant produced not for the first time in 1848 was Macleane, sponsored by Sir David Brewster, who cites as evidence an anecdote told by West, contemporary of Junius. Hamilton, Governor of Pennsylvania, visited West on the morning that the first Junius letter appeared in the newspapers. After reading carefully the letter, Hamilton declared it to have been written by Macleane, who was "a surgeon in Otway's Regiment." According to Hamilton, Macleane had attacked him violently in Philadelphia newspapers for disagreements on administration issues. To prove his familiarity with Macleane's style, Hamilton read over several phrases that Macleane had used against him. As another proof that Macleane was Junius, Brewster called attention to a "Letter to a Brigadier-General,"[15] supposed by Brewster to contain the style, temper, and thoughts of Junius and further supposed to have been written by Barré and Macleane. Dilke quotes Brewster to show the latter's argument that Macleane must be Junius:

> We have not been able to learn if Macleane was in any of the expeditions to North America, which were fitted out in 1757 or 1758; but we know (We do not know) that he accompanied the celebrated expedition in 1759, when Wolfe fell on the heights of Abraham, and the command of the British troops devolved upon Brigadier-General Townshend. Major Barré and his countryman Macleane

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[15]General Townshend.

> shared in the dangers and honours of that eventful day. * * *Brigadier-General Townshend was unpopular in the army, and particularly obnoxious to Barre and Macleane, and the other friends of Wolfe. * * * Irritated by this selfish and ungenerous conduct, the friends of Wolfe, and who could they be but Barré or Macleane, drew up and published, in 1760, the celebrated Letter to a Brigadier-General, already mentioned, which so clearly resembles in its temper, and style, and sentiments, the Letters of Junius. If Junius, therefore, wrote this letter, all the arguments of Mr. Britton in favour of Barré's being the author of it, and therefore Junius, are equally applicable to Macleane; and if we have proved that Barre could not be Junius, it follows that, under these assumptions, Macleane is entitled to that distinction.[16]

Brewster is further quoted in admitting that little is known of Macleane during his residence in America, but that he appears to have become a physician in Philadelphia and that a contemporary living in Philadelphia informs Brewster or Prior of his grandfather's friendship with Macleane:

> A gentleman in Philadelphia mentions 'Dr. Laughlin Macleane and his lady as acquaintances of his grandfather, and visitors at his house sometime between 1761 and 1766.' * * Mr. Prior informs us, that when in Philadelphia Macleane acquired great medical reputation, followed by its common attendant, envy, from the less fortunate of his brethren. * * In 1766, Macleane met Barry, the painter, at Paris.[17]

In a blustering, mildly sarcastic manner that Dilke always affected when someone made unwarranted inferences or was too careless about facts, Dilke began to chop away at the foundations of Brewster's argument:

> Now, not to delay or perplex the argument by asking questions however pertinent,--not even to comment on

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[16] Ibid., July 7, 1849, p. 685.

[17] Ibid., p. 686.

> such extraordinary opinions as that no friend of Wolfe's, in a whole discontented army, could have written a pamphlet against Townshend save either Macleane or Barre, although Townshend himself accused and challenged another man for having written it or got it written--no, nor to correct obvious and palpable errors,--let us assume the above statement to be true; and then consider, where was the interval of "some years," between 1761 and 1766, during which Macleane practised as a physician at Philadelphia, exciting the envy of the profession, . . . according to the memoirs of the Pennsylvanian?--or, according to Sir David /Brewster/, within even narrower limits--that is, between the peace of 1762 and 1766 when Barry met him in Paris.[18]

Dilke attempts here to discredit Brewster's authority, the Philadelphia gentleman, by affirming that Macleane could not have accomplished all he is said to have done. He points out, first of all, that it was in 1765, not 1766, that Barry met Macleane in Paris; further, on the authority of Parliamentary History, Dr. Musgrave met Macleane in Paris as early as 1764. Thus, instead of "some years," this interval of time in which Macleane was supposed to have made a fortune from his profession, returned to England, and visited France, becomes "some months." Then Dilke thoroughly discredits the argument about the Hamilton identification by stating "on the authority of official records," that Macleane was never a surgeon of Otway's regiment.

> What now becomes of the assertion of Governor Hamilton, that the letters of Junius were certainly written by that "d----d scoundrel," "the surgeon of Otway's regiment"? What is to become of the letter to a Brigadier-general--of the hatred to Townsend /sic/ as a stimulating power--and of one-half of the other

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[18] Ibid.

> personal feelings which, like "the legacy," serve, we are told, to identify Macleane as Junius? If the identity of the pamphleteer and Junius be proved--if the pamphlet-writer must have served under Wolfe at Quebec--and if, as Sir David intimates, the pamphlet must have been written either by Barré or Macleane, we think Mr. Britton may reverse the conclusion at which Sir David arrives, and fairly say "it follows that, under these assumptions, Barré is entitled to that distinction." But as Mr. Britton, like the churchwarden's wife, is mortal, we think it well to remind him that these are "assumptions."[19]

Dilke's objections, he admitted, do not prove that Macleane was not Junius. In so "proving," Dilke calls attention to Parliamentary records to show that Macleane was employed as secretary to Shelburne and was an avowed supporter of the ministry. Junius was not. But there are even stronger objections to Macleane's candidacy. Dilke referred to old newspapers that reveal a quarrel between Wilkes and Macleane, who challenged Wilkes to a duel. At the same time, and for a long time thereafter, Junius carried on his "long . . . friendly correspondence" with Wilkes.

Finally, Dilke produces another objection to the supposition that Macleane was Junius. He shows that at the very time that Macleane was writing "On the defense of the ministry on the subject of the Falkland Islands," Junius was attacking it. Macleane's efforts were so far unsuccessful that Dr. Johnson was called to his aid. Thus, Dilke disposed of Macleane as a candidate for Junius on the grounds

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[19] Ibid.

that he was for the most part on the side of the opposition, and was first friendly and subsequently antagonistic towards Wilkes, even challenging him to a duel, while Junius remained friendly.

In other articles of less importance appearing from time to time from 1849 to 1852, Dilke made further inquiries into the probabilities of authorship of various of Junius' letters. He pointed out the futility of analyzing handwriting and style to ascertain the work of Junius. In other articles he ridiculed theories that Chesterfield, Lyttleton, the Earl of Chatham (Pitt), and Temple were the author of these letters.

By far the most popular claimant in the first half of the nineteenth century was Sir Philip Francis, though Dilke placed little credence in this suggestion. This claim was substantiated by Francis' young wife and by the fact that Sir Philip himself never categorically denied authorship. He was a clerk in the War Office and could have gained reasonable access to government secrets had he so desired. On the publication of Wade's History and Discovery of Junius (1850), corroborating Taylor's Junius Identified (1812), Dilke reviews the opinion pronounced in favor of Sir Philip Francis:

> Lord Campbell has recorded the opinion of the Queen's Bench; and Mr. Wade tells us, that an "eminent Judge of the Common Pleas, Sir Vicary Gibbs, affirmed after the perusal of Mr. Taylor's book, that if the case had been

> argued before him as a Judge in a trial for libel, he should have directed the jury to find Sir Philip Francis guilty." Exactly the same judgment is said to have been pronounced by Lord Ellenborough,--and, Mr. Barker tells us, by Lord Erskine: and the review of 'Junius Identified' in the Edinburgh having been attributed to Mackintosh, to Brougham, and to Macaulay, three more Judges or ex-Judges are said to concur in the opinion pronounced by "Brother Gibbs."[20]

Dilke facetiously observes, however, that the judges pronounced these opinions without their wigs on and that there may be something in the wig. But upon separation of fact from theory, Dilke contended that Sir Philip's claim to Junius is not entitled to serious consideration. First, Dilke attacks the Lady Francis argument. It appeared that far from acknowledging his authorship to his wife, more than fifty years his junior, Sir Philip, according to Lady Francis, "never avowed himself more than saying he knew what my opinion was, and never contradicting it."[21] It was her belief, as she states, that "the secret of his attachment and marriage so late in life" was that, "like the wife of Midas, he wanted some one to whisper the secret to."[22] Whereupon Dilke digressed to favor the reader with a few choice remarks on connubial misfortune and unfulfilled marriage goals. "He never did whisper it /the secret/ to her!" But it is clear that Francis, in his old age at least,

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[20] Ibid., September 7, 1850, p. 939; italics Dilke's.

[21] Ibid., p. 940.

[22] Ibid.

wished to be known as Junius, though he denied it publicly. Lady Francis tells of his wedding present, an edition of Junius, and of his posthumous gift, a copy of Taylor's Junius Identified, testifying that the first gift after their marriage ". . . was an edition of Junius, which he bid me take to my room, and not let it be seen, or speak on the subject;" . . . and that . . . "his manners and conversation on this mysterious subject were such as to leave me not a shadow of doubt on the fact of his being the author, telling me circumstances that none but Junius could know."[23] Dilke regretted that while she was in a communicative mood she did not relate to the public one of those circumstances. Wade stated further on Lady Francis' authority that before he went to India Sir Philip admitted to George III that he was Junius. Dilke called attention to the incongruity of the statements that Sir Philip told her he had avowed himself to others, yet never so avowed himself to her. But the story has been told and proved false before, for George III, according to Queen Charlotte, "did not know who wrote the letters of Junius." These facts Dilke mentioned to throw discredit on the testimony of Lady Francis.

In a second notice, Dilke considered the evidence itself.[24] He quoted Wade to summarize the three types of

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., September 14, 1850, pp. 969-972.

proof that Sir Philip was Junius:

> First, the correspondence of dates and incidents in the Life of Sir Philip with the dates and incidents in the publication of the Letters; secondly, the correspondence between the style, sentiment, and ability of the Letters, &c.; and thirdly, the resemblance between the handwriting.[25]

With the second and third "proofs" Dilke will not bother to argue, pointing out that the authorship of some thirty other claimants has already been so "proved" on this basis. Dilke objected further that not one fact has been adduced to link Francis with the Grenville Party, to whom Junius, by universal agreement, was friendly. To the assumption that Junius, and therefore Francis, was known to the Grenville Party through Wilkes, Dilke answered first that Junius did not correspond with Wilkes until his career was nearly finished, and that furthermore, no connection with Wilkes and Francis had yet been discovered. Dilke pointed out other improbabilities in the statement of the Franciscans: that Francis could not have been in France in 1761 or 1762, as they contend, except as a prisoner of war; that Taylor's argument is ridiculous that Sir Philip was Junius in his twenty-ninth to thirty-second year, the "time of life in which it has been often remarked men generally undertake the greatest designs of which they are capable."[26] Furthermore,

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[25] Ibid., p. 969.

[26] Ibid., p. 970.

says Taylor, Francis was in London during the ascendancy of Junius, but Dilke countered with "so were fifty thousand others."

Dilke picks other flaws in Taylor's argument. He proves that, contrary to Taylor's sources, Sir Philip was dismissed from the War Office after Junius ceased writing, thus nullifying the motives Taylor had ascribed to Junius. Finally, to conclude his argument against what Taylor calls "personal movements," Dilke summarizes Taylor's argument, listing his objections in brackets:

> Just as Francis moves Junius moves, like substance like shadow. If Francis is in the country, Junius is away. [Junius's absence being most unwarrantably inferred from his silence,--and his silence from the dates affixed by Good and Woodfall to the private letters,--and the connexion of the two as "substance and shadow" is to be proved by very slight and very suspicious evidence tending to show that Francis was once absent when Junius was supposed to be silent.] If Francis is abroad, Junius is not heard of till his return. [Junius having closed his labours months before Francis is supposed to have gone abroad--and "Veteran" some time--and Francis having returned two months before Junius is supposed to be again heard of.] If Francis is aggrieved by abrupt dismissal from office, Junius suffers, and pours out the vials of his wrath against all the offending parties. [Even "Veteran" having emptied the last of his vials on the presumed offending parties before Francis was dismissed, if dismissed at all.] If Francis finally disappears from the scene to another hemisphere, Junius writes no more. [Junius having ceased to write for eighteen or twenty months before.] The Siamese twins were not more closely conjoined.[27]

Dilke next attacks the center of the Franciscan argument, with persuasive logic by pointing out that Almon,

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[27] Ibid., p. 972.

in publishing the Life of Chatham, took Chatham's speeches from notes said to be those of Sir Philip. From evidence afforded only in his letters, these notes are said to be the same as those Junius must have taken. Thus, though neither Francis nor Junius were members of Parliament, both frequented the galleries and "both took notes of the same speeches at the same time and in the same words."[28] Dilke admits that he does not know how Junius and Francis got their information, though he suggests the newspapers as one possibility. Taylor had anticipated this argument, however, and had stated that after long and laborious search, he had been unable to find any trace of one such speech, and must assume therefore that it had never been printed. Therefore, since Francis' notes of the speech are so similar to what Junius' must have been, judging from his letter on that speech, Francis must be Junius. The theory is fraught with loop-holes, but Dilke elects graciously to overlook them. He will not question that Almon's notes of Chatham's speeches are purported to be notes by Francis; nor will he balk at Taylor's suggestion that Francis' notes are exactly the same as what Junius' "must have been." Instead, he chooses to argue that Taylor met with his difficulty in finding printed copies not because copies of the speech were not printed, but because newspapers themselves were in 1850, seventy years

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[28] Ibid., September 21, 1850, p. 994.

later, not generally available. Then, after six pages of comparison of Francis' notes with Junius' Letters, generally debunking Taylor's "ifs," Dilke utterly devastates the latter's entire argument by giving the readers "the benefit of a morning's labours": he produced a newspaper account of the very debate Junius-Francis allegedly took in notes from the galleries! Then follow the references to the debate.

There was no need to look further. The only connection between Francis and Junius had been broken. No closer than any other person within reach of the North Briton Extraordinary or the London Evening Post was Francis to Junius. Dilke closes by calling again for his "one fact."[29]

Dilke's own opinion of the identity of Junius is never set forth in very positive language. But in a rather apologetic manner, he wrote an article in 1851, linking Junius with the Reverand William Mason, poet and court chaplain. Dilke describes Mason as a friend to Walpole,

> a man of great ability,--a poet of high order, his "Elfrida," after many years, still lives in our

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[29]"Sir Charles Dilke /sic/ concluded his attack on the Franciscan theory by saying that he hoped he would never hear Francis mentioned again until some one fact had been brought forward to show that there was a connection between him and Junius. . . . In the face of so notable a contradiction of the supposed facts, the Franciscan hypothesis must either give way or bring forward its 'one fact.'" (C. W. Everett, The Letters of Junius, (London, 1927), p. 381.)

> recollection as a creation beautiful for its simplicity, tenderness, and sweetness,--a satirist whose pen was diamond-pointed,--a painter and a musician, theoretical and practical:--in brief, a man of highly cultivated taste and infinitely varied accomplishments, who excelled in everything that he cared to know or to do. . . .[30]

Dilke adduces proof that his political philosophy was that of Junius, that his friends were those of Junius, that his position of court chaplain gave him access to Parliamentary proceedings, and that his abilities were quite equal to the task. Furthermore, Boyd, whom many believed to have been the agent of Junius, told Mrs. Boyd that Junius was the author of a then-anonymous Heroic Epistles. This poem was subsequently proved to be Mason's. Dilke then quotes Mason, who links Junius and the Heroic Epistles. After discussing in a letter to Walpole the authorship of this poem, Mason writes:

> Our talk was entirely on general subjects and literary matters, such as Sir John D. and A. Stewart's book, and "The Heroic Epistle." I controverted none of his opinions, only as he seemed to think that the Epistle had merit, I ventured to say that I thought it worthy of Soame Jennyns, had it suited his polite sentiments: he replied, "so it was, but S. J. Would never have used that harsh kind of satire! From his Lordship's account I find that it is generally supposed to be Temple Lutterell's, although Almon declares it to be the work of a young man, and his first work. After all we live in an age of miracles, that two such writers as he and Junius should keep themselves concealed.[31]

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[30] Athenaeum, May 17, 1851, p. 520.

[31] Ibid., p. 521.

Dilke feels that it is curious that Mason, who was the author, should couple these secrets together. He quotes further several passages from Mason's poems to show that both Mason and Junius hated the same personalities and especially the Scotch. Both insulted the same men, Dilke's theory is without fault; all parts fit perfectly, with none of the objections such as those to Macleane or Francis. But even Dilke himself was not convinced. After presenting a faultless argument, he debunked his own theory in the concluding paragraph:

> Enough, in all conscience, of what may be thought an idle speculation. Our apology is, briefly, that such speculations are just now the fashion; that such coincidences are at least curious; and that in the case of Mason it is a physical possibility,--which is more than can be said of all claimants to the honour. . . . We will only add, that if the fox now uncovered does not give the reader a good day's sport,--we have another which we lately ran to ground, and which shall be unearthed for his amusement.[32]

That no other candidate appeared does not tend to strengthen Dilke's argument or indicate that he became more convinced as time passed.

It is doubtful that a candidate will ever be produced that could have been in all points satisfactory to Dilke. This is true not because he is too demanding, too insistent that all doubts be satisfactorily explained away, but rather because he tended to think too much of the abilities of

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[32] Ibid., p. 523.

Junius. Only a poet or an otherwise capable figure would have answered to such a high expectation. A Johnson, perhaps, or some other equivalent, would have been accepted as Junius, but not a Macleane, a Francis, or even a Mason. Dilke's attitude toward Junius is never better revealed than in the following passage:

> Junius won his great triumph because he spoke with the indignant voice, not of an individual, not of a faction, not of a party, but of the people. He was the eloquent embodiment of their thoughts and feelings. He may have differed from them on a hundred points of policy or of government beyond their comprehension,--but in the main, on all great popular questions, he was one with them, heart and mind. Junius was not of the common herd of common men,--no, nor an exceptional man taken from it. It was not that his genius transcended that of other men; but that he was not open to those influences which direct and control them. He was one and alone:--isolated, self-dependent, self-balanced. He had great failings, but no weaknesses. He had no vulnerable point about him:--not even that which Milton calls "the last infirmity," as the silence of a century proves. "He loved the cause independent of persons,"--wrote himself down as "one of the people,"--and said, in words that would startle like thunder the gentilities and the imbecilities of our literary world, "I love and esteem THE MOB." No vague generalities, therefore--no likings or dislikings--no personal friendships or personal animosities--no amount of such proofs would with us be any proof at all, or even tend to fix on an individual the authorship of Junius's Letters.[33]

No common man such as Macleane or Francis could possibly answer to these ideals.[34]

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[33] Ibid., June 15, 1853, p. 734.

[34] Cordasco, author of A Junius Bibliography (New York, 1949), states his reasons for believing that Macleane was Junius. Some of these reasons were discredited by Dilke in 1850, but others are apparently the results of scholarship since Dilke. It is worth while to list Cordasco's

As with Swift's writings, Dilke's insistence on facts led him to reject certain works and letters allegedly by Junius, and this rejection laid the groundwork for his consequent dispelling of myths, legends, and rumors that had thwarted Junius scholarship to his time.

A second outgrowth of Dilke's doggedly insisting on "What are the facts?" is his charges against Edmund Burke and Alexander Pope. His interest in Burke appears to have

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arguments, which are as follows, and then to give Dilke's answers to these arguments.

1. Governor Hamilton categorically named Macleane to be Junius when the first Letter appeared. Hamilton had known Macleane in America during the French and English hostility.

2. As secretary to the Earl of Shelburne, and as bosom friend of Colonel Isaac Barre, Macleane, like Junius, is fully informed about affairs of state.

3. Macleane's residence in England coincides exactly with the activity of Junius.

4. Only for Macleane, the Scotsman whose father was driven from Scotland, can the strong Scotch antipithy /sic/ of Junius be explained.

5. Burke categorically named Macleane to be Junius.

6. Only Macleane's relationship with Wilkes can explain the eventual disassociation of Wilkes and Junius.

7. Amongst the Brewster papers is a print called the Triparte Junius, which pictures Macleane with two coadjutors.

8. Shelburne in his last days, promised that he would identify Junius. It was generally agreed that Shelburne's identification would be definitive. Amongst the Brewster papers is a hand-sewn manuscript which contains the miscellaneous data of Shelburne for the identification. Here,

been first stimulated by Peter Burke's volume The Public and Domestic Life of Edmund Burke, which Dilke reviewed in the Athenaeum in 1853.[35] He was especially interested in Burke's

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Shelburne categorically names Macleane as the author.

To these claims Dilke objected:

(1) Even had he been correct about Macleane's having been "a surgeon in Otway's Regiment," Hamilton based his opinion merely on matters pertaining to style.

(2) Any number of Englishmen, by reading newspapers and by knowing any member of Parliament--assuming Junius himself was not a member of Parliament--could have been fully informed of matters of state.

(3) So with 50,000 other Englishmen.

(4) When Bute et al were in power and in league with George III, Scotsmen were not generally popular. Furthermore, this was not the same Macleane, for Laughlin Macleane's father never set foot in Scotland.

(5) New evidence, but see below.

(6) Macleane challenged Wilkes to a duel in 1771. In March, 1772, Junius and Wilkes were still exchanging friendly letters.

(7) New evidence, but see below.

(8) New evidence, but see below.

Neither here nor in his "Colonel Macleane and the Junius Controversy," ELH, September, 1949, does Cordasco give his authority for Burke's catagorical statement. It is not known, therefore, if Burke so categorically named Macleane as Junius before or after he categorically denied knowledge of Junius to Dr. Johnson and Townsend on separate occasions. Furthermore, Brewster was a staunch supporter of Macleane, and the "triparte Junius" is open to suspicion. It need only be remarked that Shelburne, who died in 1772, obviously would not have needed the "miscellaneous data . . . for the identification" had he been certain of Macleane's authorship.

[35] Athenaeum, December 3, 1853, pp. 1447-1449.

domestic life, about which very little was known. Apparently knowing considerably more about this phase of Burke's life than did the author, Dilke proceeded to demonstrate serious flaws in Peter Burke's book. Submitting the following passage "as a curious specimen of haphazard criticism," Dilke quotes Peter Burke:

> Edmund Burke devoted a great portion of his time at college to general reading; his chief subject was history--the future weapon of his strength; among historians Plutarch was his favourite. In oratory, he pored over Demosthenes; he took his moral philosophy from Francis Bacon, and especially from Addison; and he doted on the poetry of Shakespeare. In classics his bias was for Horace, Virgil, and Lucretius.[36]

Dilke's comment on this passage is significant for its insight into respective merits of the ancients:

> Our readers, we suspect, will be as much astonished as we were to learn that Edmund Burke, a profound thinker and powerful reasoner, preferred Plutarch to Thucydides, Tacitus, and Livy![37]

In pointing out first that Plutarch was a biographer and not a historian, Dilke begins subtly to cast doubts over the scholarship of the author. Next, he refers to the phrase "pored over Demosthenes" and says simply "we doubt the fact," for Burke failed to exhibit the mastery of the Greek language expected from someone who had "pored over Demosthenes." Furthermore, Dilke asserts that the "austere severity and nude grandeur" of Demosthenes is not at all comparable to

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[36] Ibid., p. 1447.

[37] Ibid.

the style of Cicero, whom Burke is known to have admired most but of whom Peter Burke makes no mention. Finally, in a burst of distilled total-effect, yet supremely penetrative, criticism Dilke argues in contradiction to Peter Burke's contention that they are intellectually akin that Burke, Addison, and Bacon are philosophically incompatible:

> Bacon's mind was essentially prospective--and Burke's to a great degree was retrospective. Bacon was a foe to Human prejudices,--Burke dealt leniently with many of the fond illusions of the vulgar. Bacon had little regard for prescription,--Burke had a remarkable deference for all that was established. His passions rarely influenced the thinking of the author of De Augmentis, --his intense susceptibility seldom left Burke even in the closet. One was essentially a rationalist of a peculiarly original school,--and the other in a philosophical sense can be accepted only as an eclectic thinker. A man acquainted with the writings of Bacon and those of Burke could never suppose that the latter "took his moral philosophy" from the former. Then we come to "especially from Addison"! It is certainly placing Addison on a high pedestal to exhibit him as the master of Burke in philosophy.[38]

Dilke continues to rail against the author's evident unfitness for the task, pointing out several errors relating to Peter Burke's ignorance of the political history of the eighteenth century. He concludes the article by charging that Peter Burke plagiarized the very predecessors that he had snubbed.

In the issue for the following week[39] Dilke supported his charge. After mentioning the deficiencies in the

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., December 10, pp. 1476-1479.

book with reference to Burke's own family, Dilke lists passages side by side and nearly identical to show that Peter Burke lifted whole paragraphs from Bisset's Life of Burke (1798). To the striking similarity he does not give much comment--not much is needed--but proceeds directly to complain of the dearth of information for nine years in Burke's life, of obvious mistakes in the dates for the chronology of the canon, and of the false impressions left by the author of Burke's private life. Dilke concludes this article by observing that if personal and domestic circumstances impart the only true knowledge of character, Edmund Burke's character had been neglected.

In spite of his evident dissatisfaction with Peter Burke's Life of Burke, it was the stimulus Dilke needed to enter into detailed and extensive inquiry as to the domestic issues in Burke's life. On the publication of a fifth edition of Prior's Life of Burke in 1855, Dilke was prepared to exchange blow for blow over certain domestic issues, especially Burke's finances.[40] While the tone of the article is not friendly, the matter of the review is, paradoxically, an indirect compliment to Prior for taking advantage of certain discoveries and suggestions Dilke himself had made earlier. But because Prior had not acknowledged his debt either to the Athenaeum or to anyone else, Dilke takes care that credit

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[40] Ibid., February 17, 1855, pp. 195-197.

should go where it belonged. He berates Prior's evident smugness in reference to the lack of new facts:

> A dim light has broken upon us by the publication of this, the fifth, edition. Not that Mr. Prior has said anything to enlighten us--that is not his humour;--not that the reader of this fifth edition is forewarned that there are statements in it contrary to positive statements in preceding editions. Quite otherwise. Mr. Prior assures him, 'in testimony of the care with which the work was originally written,' that in the many volumes of contemporary men and history since published, 'no incident that I have mentioned is contradicted and no new one added.'[41]

Dilke takes issue with the notion that the previous editions were so good that the present one neither contradicted the old nor added any new details. Quoting at length to demonstrate both contradictions and additions and to prove Prior's unacknowledged debt to the Athenaeum, Dilke suggests that if Prior did not make these changes, then Puck must have done so. First of all, Dilke demonstrates the incongruity of the fourth and fifth editions in the treatment of Burke's finances.

His inquiries into Burke's financial status comprise the most important of Dilke's studies on Burke, for the discrepancy between Burke's calculated income and his known expenses ultimately led Dilke to levy serious charges against him. In demonstrating Puck's part in the fifth edition, Dilke reviews briefly the known history of Burke's monetary circumstances: in near poverty, Burke bought a

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[41] Ibid., p. 195.

house and farm, Gregories, in the parishes of Penn and Beaconsfield, for over twenty thousand pounds. Prior to this purchase he had served as secretary to Hamilton and later to Rockingham. The former had in 1763 been instrumental in procuring for Burke a pension of three hundred pounds per year from the Irish treasury.[42] This pension and an additional one hundred pounds per annum for compiling the Annual Register were apparently Burke's only income. To this point, Dilke admits that Prior's fifth edition was in agreement with the preceding four. But some detailed inquiry concerning Burke's known expenditures, Dilke avers, is not in the preceding editions, although the same information can be found in the pages of the Athenaeum. Having thus hinted off-handedly at Prior's secret fountain of knowledge, Dilke digresses for some length to suggest in page after page of financial detail that Burke could have come into a sum of twenty thousand pounds only by some means other than honorable. He returns, however, to make an accusation against Prior for his dishonesty. Perhaps to insure that

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[42]John Morley, a contemporary biographer has this to say of this connection: "In thanking him for this service, Burke proceeded to bargain that the obligation should not bind him to give to his patron the whole of his time." But on their subsequent misunderstanding, this biographer continues: "With an irrational stubbornness, that may well astound us when we think of the noble genius that he thus wished to confine to paltry personal duties, he persisted that Burke should bind himself to his service for life, and to the exclusion of other interests." Burke (London, 1923), pp. 26-27.

Prior would in the future acknowledge credit where it was due, Dilke cites one other evidence of a mischievous Puck:

> We, indeed, except for our sympathy with Mr. Prior, might rejoice, for Puck has not only followed our hints, but without scruple has made this fifth edition contradict all the preceding editions and confirm our speculations. . . . Mr. Prior tells us, or leaves us to infer, that he has seen no reason to change any of his opinions: yet we find--in this fifth edition--that the many pages in proof that Junius was an Irishman and Burke Junius--by far the best argued question throughout the work--are gone! It was all, we are now told, a mere speculative pleasantry, inserted to humour one of Mr. Burke's "relatives." Mr. Prior had no faith in his own argument! Is this fact or fiction? Is Mr. Prior in earnest now, or was he in earnest in the four preceding editions? Is it Mr. Prior that is speaking, or Mr. Puck?[43]

Dilke confesses that Prior's Life was the best thus far published, but he adds a word of regret that it is not better. Prior's fifth edition fared little better than did Peter Burke's Life.

In various articles in the Athenaeum and Notes and Queries from 1855 to 1858, Dilke hints strongly of Burke's dishonesty. He outlines in detail Burke's known income prior to the time he bought Gregories:

> He arrived in London an adventurer, not to use the term disrespectfully, with all the world before him where to choose. He was open for a Scotch professorship,--thought of the Bar, and entered himself at the Temple,--thought earnestly and long of emigrating to America,--injured his health by hard study,--married early, and resided with his father-in-law,--eked out the small income required by literary drudgery,--compiled 'Annual Registers,'--abridged the History of England, wrote

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[43] Athenaeum, February 17, 1855, p. 196.

> anonymously in the papers and the magazines. He then, by some accident unknown, got appointed Secretary to Gerrard Hamilton, and was paid after the fashion of the day by a pension of 300 pounds a year,--quarrelled with Hamilton, and threw up the pension in 1765, as bound in conscience to do. In 1765 he became Secretary to Rockingham, and helf office for a twelve-month. In 1768 he bought Gregories!--and lived there ever after in a style of unostentatious but noble hospitality.[44]

Dilke was blasted by correspondents for questioning the honesty and otherwise inquiring into private affairs of a great man. He answered that honesty is not a private affair, continuing all the while to uncover damaging evidence relative to Burke's transactions. Finally, he finds evidence of a rather concrete nature of possible shady dealings of Burke. It was known that Lord Verney was a friend and benefactor to Burke; that after 1769, when Burke purchased Gregories, their friendship seemed to wane; and that in 1783, Verney in a lawsuit brought charges against Burke. Biographers in the 1800's were not acquainted with the nature of these charges and knew only that the court ruled in Burke's favor, to the great dissatisfaction of the public. Dilke cleared away the mystery on his publication, in Notes and Queries, of a Bill In Chancery dated 16 June, 1783, wherein Lord Verney, the plaintiff, appealed for payment of about six thousand pounds for money loaned in 1769 to Edmund Burke, defendant, for the purpose of paying mondy due on a mortgage levied against Gregories. According to Verney, the estate was to have been

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[44]Ibid., December 17, 1853, p. 1513.

signed over to him, and Burke was to have executed a bond to that end. Verney professes he has received neither bond nor interest on the amount, although he has made repeated inquiries of the defendant. Dilke then refers in this article to some of Burke's eulogists, quoting from one of them to show that one such eulogist, Bisset, admitted that the public was dissatisfied with Burke's treatment of Verney.[45]

On the publication of this Bill In Chancery a Burke descendant scorns Dilke's attempts to prove his illustrious ancestor dishonest and is happy to be able "to set at rest all question" of where Burke obtained money for Gregories.[46] He is an amateur at the hands of Dilke, however, who demonstrates errors, contradictions, and misstatements throughout the article. After restating his thesis that either Lord Verney or Burke was a prevaricator, which the public thought to be Burke, Dilke rests his case.[47]

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[45] Notes and Queries, May 31, 1862, p. 431.

[46] Ibid., p. 374.

[47] John Morley, however, is far from convinced of the validity of Dilke's conclusions. "The common answer from Burke's enemies, and even from some neutral inquirers, gives to every lover of this great man's high character an unpleasant shock." He states without giving authority that "The balance of six thousand was advanced by Lord Rockingham on Burke's bond," though the biographer admits that it still remains a puzzle "not only how Burke was able to maintain (purchase?) so handsome an establishment, but how he could ever suppose it likely that he would be able to maintain it." (Morley, pp. 32-35.)

His articles on Pope have caused Dilke to be remembered with admiration by modern editors. Dilke's discovery and purchase in 1854 of the Caryll correspondence enabled him to correct many previous biographers' errors and add new facts concerning Pope's life. Although Dilke proved in 1854 that Pope had altered certain letters, had added to others, and had even constructed correspondences which in reality never existed, it was not until after a series of articles climaxing in 1860 that he was able to outline the strange and complicated history of the various surreptitious and authentic editions. In so doing, he was able to trace the even stranger and shadier dealings of Pope himself in these editions.

In one of his first articles on Pope in 1854, Dilke states the known history of the surreptitious editions of the letters; shows that Pope in the authorized editions misdirected, shortened, and added to certain letters; and corrects some mistakes of previous biographers concerning Pope's financial conditions.[48] Dilke's story of the pirated editions of the letters is simple enough; it became complicated only when Pope's complicity in the matter was made known, but that discovery was not until 1860. Dilke could affirm in 1854 only that a Mr. Cromwell, one of Pope's correspondents, gave his letters to a Mrs. Thomas, who

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[48] Athenaeum, July 8, 1854, pp. 835-839.

professed to admire Pope but whose admiration was found unequal to straitened circumstances when she sold Pope's letters to Curll, a bookseller. Upon their publication, Pope was indignant and wrote to correspondents to ask that his letters be returned. An anonymous writer offered Curll the memoirs of Pope from 1704 to 1734. Another anonymous figure "in masquerade costume, a clergyman's gown with a councellor's band," approached and delivered to Curll printed copies of this correspondence. Because he was instructed to do so, Curll advertised the publication as a collection of letters to and from a number of Earls and other important men. These, then, were letters of Peers printed without their consent, and their publication was considered a violation of Peers' privileges. Curll was summoned before the House of Lords and dismissed because no names of any Peers were found in the collection. Pope offered a reward of twenty guineas to anyone who could discover the person or persons that carried on those negotiations, and double that amount if it could be told under whose direction the party or parties acted. Dilke gave Pope's own story thus:

> Pope's own version of the story, published at the time, was this,--that, alarmed by the indiscretion of Mr. Cromwell, he had collected his letters--that, as several of them served to revive past scenes of friendship, he was induced to preserve them, to add a few notes here and there, and some small pieces in prose and verse, and that to effect this "an amanuensis or two were employed." The inference which Pope intended is obvious;

> yet Pope never called on these amanuenses, publicly or privately, to give evidence on the subject; he never even named them. In brief, Curll's strange story was never disproved; and Pope's story, still more strange, was never proved.[49]

It is obvious that in 1854 Dilke did not believe Pope's version about the amanuenses. In so disbelieving, he was not alone, for he states that nearly all who have inquired into the matter agree with Lintot's statement to Samuel Johnson: "Pope knew better than anybody else how Curll obtained the copies."[50] But no biographer had produced an iota of proof.

Subsequently, Pope announced that it was necessary to publish a genuine collection of his letters owing to errors and omissions of the first pirated edition. Carruthers, as well as Dilke somewhat later, pointed out that the pirated edition and the subsequent "authentic" edition, prepared by Pope himself, showed little differences; in short, the interpolations, omissions, and errors are precisely such as Pope desired. Dilke in 1854, did not undertake to disprove Pope's version, but he offered proof that Pope in the Curll and in his own editions had tampered with letters and had even fabricated correspondences that never existed.

Dilke in 1854 acquired Pope's original letters to Cromwell. By collating these originals with the almost

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[49] Ibid., p. 835.

[50] Ibid.

identical "surreptitious" and "authentic" editions, Dilke was able to prove duplicity on Pope's part. Purporting to be addressed to Addison in both the pirated and "authentic" editions, a letter beginning "I am more joy'd at your return than I should be at that of the sun"[51] is in the original not directed to Addison at all, but to Caryll. Furthermore, Dilke pointed out significant omissions and interpolations within this single letter wherein Pope had "cooked" his own correspondence to indicate that he had sent letters to Addison, when actually they were sent to Caryll. By changing names of personages and revising incidents, the letters were made to fit Addison instead of Caryll. Evidence of tampering was indisputable.

The evidence, too, that "Pope knew better than anybody else how Curll obtained the copies" is indicated but not yet proved. Dilke is "sorry for the consequence--sorry at the exposure of such duplicity--sorry for the want of sincerity, honesty and truthfulness of our little hero."[52]

Dilke's earlier outline in 1854 of the Curll publication was substantially correct. By 1860, he was able to construct in elaborate detail the whole history of the "surreptitious" edition, at the same time producing incriminating evidence that could leave no doubt of Pope's

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[51] Ibid., p. 836.

[52] Ibid.

complicity in the matter. Upon Curll's publication of the Letters to Cromwell in 1726 Pope had written to his correspondents to ask for his own letters. Some complied with this request, others did not, and some sent copies of the originals. Pope's own story was that an amanuensis was employed to copy the letters thus received from correspondents. "Obliging friends" entreated Pope to publish his own edition of the letters "to prevent a worse." Pope declined, publicly, at least. On October, 11, 1733, one "P. T." writes to Curll offering him a chance to publish some letters, anecdotes, in P. T.'s possession. On Curll's eager response, P. T. sent anecdotes but no letters; however, he asked Curll to print an advertisement, after which he should receive the letters. Furthermore, the original letters were to be shown at Curll's bookstore upon publication, a promise impossible to keep, Dilke asserts, unless P. T. were Pope. Curll, too wary to accept P. T.'s terms, would not advertise without the originals, and for a time the matter was dropped. Out of the goodness of his heart, so Curll claimed, he wrote to Pope explaining that a P. T. claimed to have in his possession a large collection of Pope's letters. Pope replied to this letter via the newspapers:

> Whereas E. C., Bookseller, has written to Mr. P. pretending that a person, the Initials of whose name are P.T., hath offered him to print a large collection of the said Mr. P____'s letters, to which E.C. requires an Answer. This is to certify that Mr. P.____having never had, nor intending ever to have any private

> Correspondence with E.C. /who had published Pope's letters to Cromwell/ gives his answer in this Manner. That he knows no such person as P.T.; that he thinks no Man has any such Collection; that he believes the whole a Forgery, and shall not trouble himself about it.[53]

Dilke calls attention to at least three interesting aspects of this letter: the unfriendly tone, the false implication that Curll had threatened to print the letters, and the subtle and disguised permission to do so, Pope refused to "trouble himself about it." On April 3, Curll was understandably irritated. Dilke surmises that left to himself, Curll undoubtedly would have published in the newspapers the plain truth and would have denied that there were any clandestine negotiations with P. T. or that he had threatened to publish any of Pope's letters or had the authority to do so. Thus, on the appearance of such a statement from Curll, there could be no pretext for the obliging friends to suggest that Pope publish a new editbn of letters "to prevent a worse."[54] But before Curll had an opportunity to publish such a letter he received one the next day from P. T., affirming that since the treaty had been broken off in 1733, P. T. had himself been persuaded to print the letters. As Dilke puts it, "Revenge is Sweet." Since the letters were already printed, Curll could be no more responsible for their publication than any other bookseller. Accordingly, on April 5, two

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[53] Ibid., p. 299.

[54] Ibid., p. 301.

days after Pope's advertisement, Curll's was published. Thus far, he had reacted just as Pope had wished. Still, Curll would not advertise the actual contents of the volume until he could see the originals. P. T., on the other hand, was anxious for Curll to commit himself in an advertisement before he could verify the contents. A second impasse was imminent. But shortly afterwards, a parson, or a person disguised as one, appeared at Curll's home with a few of the original letters and a promise to deliver the remainder after the advertisement. Dilke again identifies P. T. with Pope:

> He /Curll/ knew Pope's handwriting well--he had the originals of the Cromwell Letters still in his possession. Where, then, did the originals shown to Curll come from? They were avowedly in Pope's possession long after. But they must have been out of his possession and doing service on that memorable evening.[55]

Finally, on the arrival of a few printed copies of the letters, Curll issued the advertisement as directed: "Letters to and from certain lords."

At 2:00 p. m. the next day five cartons of books were delivered on horseback to Curll's home, but before a single bale could be opened, the entire lot was seized by officers from the House of Lords, and Curll was ordered to appear next morning to answer charges. After due examination, no such letters to Lords were found as evidence;

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[55] Ibid.

Curll was released, together with the letters. It is doubtful that Curll ever realized that P. T. was actually Pope himself, though the fact is manifest to one having access to original manuscripts. Thus, a second result of Dilke's search for facts was his discovery of dishonesty in the private lives of Burke and Pope.

A final manifestation of Dilke's insistence on facts was his defense of John Wilkes, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Pope, whom he had earlier censured for dishonest meddling with his own letters. Dilke undertook the herculean task of defending John Wilkes in three articles ranging over a period of five years, from 1852-1857. The articles contain a touch of sarcasm on the fickleness of fortune and in addition reveal much of Dilke's political philosophy at this time. Surprisingly enough, near the beginning of this series, he states that Wilkes was not an "exceptional" man. Later he turns this statement into bitter irony, if not sarcasm. He admits that Wilkes had vices, but mentions only one: he was a bad husband. To serve as a balance for this fault, Dilke calls attention to his virtues as an excellent father, especially as seen in the dutiful, lifelong affection from his daughter; to the directions in her will to be buried by his side; to her inability to be apart from him when visiting her mother for more than a week at a time.

Wilkes was a product of his time, according to Dilke, who further observed that he cannot be censured without

censuring also the age in which he lived--an age which, from the mid-nineteenth century point of view, was anything but virtuous. Dilke felt that because his own age was much tamer than the age in which Wilkes lived, no sane biographer would attempt to eulogize Wilkes.

> No one, as we lately said, can in this nineteenth century have any desire to make a hero of John Wilkes. The prejudices, feelings, virtues, vices of the age,--all run counter to such Quixotic daring. There is not enough of the blood of the martyrs left in literary hearts to stimulate even its enthusiasts to fight for a dead and almost forgotten reputation. Yet, we must own that, as literary journalists, we have an occasional twinge of conscience on this subject. Thus, it gave us a sharp momentary pang when, to serve a selfish and temporary purpose, Lord Brougham poured out his vituperation on the memory of John Wilkes. Since then, scarcely a writer has adverted to the period who has not followed his Lordship's example, and given evidence of his morality at the easy rate of a like reprobation.[56]

Since Wilkes appears to be a product of that age, it is all the more unfair to make him its scapegoat. It is neither wisdom, charity, nor justice "to pile up our indignation against the vices of a generation on the head of one man."[57]

Dilke claimed that he could produce "numberless numbers" of testimonials of Wilkes' kindness, affability, honesty, and good humor. From a standpoint of political principles, Dilke points first at Wilkes' record in Parliament and concludes that he could not be accused of being a

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[56] Ibid., January 3, 1852, p. 7.

[57] Ibid.

political opportunist. His principles were consistent regardless of which party was in power. Furthermore, though he was hated and feared by the majority in Parliament, he was for most of his career the most popular man in England. And he never lost or abused that confidence. Again, producing abundant testimony respecting Wilkes' personal character, Dilke quotes Lord Mahon, never sympathetic to Wilkes, in praising his "dauntless courage and high animal spirits," and good humor and kindliness.[58] Another contemporary, Gibbon, praised Wilkes "inexhaustible spirits, infinite wit and humour, and . . . great . . . knowledge."[59] Another political opponent confided that "Mr. Wilkes was the pleasantest companion, the politest gentleman, and the best scholar he ever knew."[60]

Wilkes is sometimes censured for deserting his friends, but Dilke takes great pains to demonstrate that each accusation is false and unjust. Dilke believed firmly that Wilkes was the victim of treachery at the hands of others, and that perhaps one of the most flagrant instances of deceit was Pitt's double-dealing with him. After securing enough authority to be able to aid Wilkes in obtaining some needed reforms, Pitt betrayed him to the king for personal

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[58] Ibid., p. 9.

[59] Ibid., January 10, p. 49.

[60] Ibid.

preferment. The occasion of this betrayal rested on the controversial North Briton #45, which Wilkes earlier with Pitt had composed. While criticism of royalty in this paper is less vitriolic than that found in certain others of the same era, the king saw in this issue a chance to rid himself--so he thought--of a nuisance, and accordingly chose to take the insults as personal. After meeting twice with George III, Pitt, who doubtless had a hand in the publication, tacitly agreed, so Dilke claims, to rescind and condemn publicly not only the controversial paper but Wilkes as well.

In connection with this display of high treason, Dilke alludes to another reason why Wilkes was refused his seat in Parliament. Sometime earlier, in his vigorous youth and hot blood, Wilkes had composed an obscene poem entitled Essay on Woman, a parody of Pope's Essay on Man. For this indiscretion he was aspersed years later in Parliament. Since Wilkes had his own printing press, he undertook to print thirteen, or perhaps fourteen, copies for private circulation. This printing was probably never completed, though his enemies managed to obtain about ninety-two lines, a quantity quite sufficient to blacken his character. Wilkes had no opportunity to defend himself. While Dilke offhandedly alludes to the uncertainty as to the real authorship of the poem, he argues his point that in politics Wilkes accepted infinitely more abuse than he gave. Having recounted the hurts and ingratitude to which Wilkes was

subject, Dilke by way of bitter sarcasm reminds his readers of the majority of politicians, unprincipled as they are, who do service while they barter their souls and in the end receive for their duplicity a pension. Wilkes, because he was principled and consistent, "got nothing!" Had he been rewarded justly, Dilke points out, Wilkes would have been a patriot, and the Wilkes story would be different:

> Had he succeeded in getting the appointment of ambassador to Constantinople--had he gone out as governor to Canada--had he even crept in amongst the obscurities who presided at the Board of Trade--the old esprit de corps would have protected him. Had he won for himself a place, or a peerage, or a pension for life--or even a good reversion--he might have been tolerated, and have figured as a patriot to this hour--we know that half the "patriots" of the Georgian era can show no better title: --but to suffer and get nothing was a bad example.[61]

Dilke reiterates that Wilkes "got nothing." He received no pension and consequently is not an exceptional man. And therefore, the four reforms Wilkes was successful in achieving in Parliament must amount to nothing:

> . . . the abolition of these General Warrants--the declared illegality of seizing letters and papers, except in cases of high treason--the publication of the debates, and the consequent responsibility of members of Parliament to an informed constituency--and the recognition of the right of juries in cases of libel to judge of the intention as well as the act, the law as well as the fact.[62]

Rarely, if ever, is Dilke in his criticism more sarcastic than he was in his denunciation of the treatment

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[61] Ibid., p. 48.

[62] Ibid., January 3, 1852, p. 8.

accorded Wilkes; nor is he content to leave Wilkes defended only in this instance. In 1857, he revealed that grave doubts exist as to whether Wilkes was actually the author of the Essay on Woman.[63] Even if Wilkes were guilty, Dilke contended with cogent logic that Wilkes was most unjustly treated by Parliament. First of all, Dilke argues that Wilkes was unable to defend himself or in any way be permitted to justify his actions, since he had been shot in a duel by Martin, a political enemy. Next, assuming that the charge that he wrote and printed obscene literature was true, he had no intention to make public the poem. Because it was a private affair, the tactics to blacken his name were an unjust infringement of personal rights. Third, it was not even charged that he had written the poem, merely that he had printed portions of it. Had the opposition been able to ascertain his authorship, they most certainly would not have missed the opportunity. Wilkes, even if he had been permitted to deny his part in the incident, would for matters of principle have remained silent, Dilke contends. Finally Dilke produces testimony from letters of friends proclaiming Wilkes' innocence.[64] Wilkes may have been

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[63] Notes and Queries, July 4, 11, 18, 1857, pp. 1,21,41.

[64] The degree of success with which Dilke defended Wilkes against this charge is afforded by a biographer. See R. W. Postgate, That Devil Wilkes (New York, 1929), pp. 72ff.

guilty of some connection with the poem; Dilke never states unequivocally otherwise. By calling attention to the good points of Wilkes' character and to the vicissitudes of fortunehe had to endure, it is quite likely that Dilke's real intention was to point up the legitimate doubts of Wilkes' guilt rather than to convince the reader of his innocence. At any rate, his fairness in presentation, his alignment on the side of a then-unpopular cause, his marshalling of argument, and certainly, his telling satire, are admirable aspects of his defense and reveal in passing the nature of Dilke's critical modus operandi as well as his integrity as an individual.

Defending reputations of so-called "damaged souls" seems to have been one of Dilke's chief interests. In two articles in 1861 he defends Lady Mary Wortley Montagu from slanders alluding to a connection with a dashing French speculator in South Sea schemes and from charges linking her name with Pope.[65] The story had circulated that unable to live with her husband, she had gone to France, met the young man, and behaved indiscreetly. After returning to England, she had received ten letters from this alleged paramour, nine of which were preserved. Biographers searched in vain for the tenth, for they were sure that it would reveal the entire story. Dilke, however, proved that she left England

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[65] Athenaeum, April 6, 1861, pp. 460-63; April 19, pp. 492-94.

on good terms with her husband, that she went to the continent only because of her health, and that she behaved quite circumspectly. Finally, Dilke produced the controversial "tenth letter," which was "so harmless and so innocent that it was overlooked."[66]

The other article is concerned with the estrangement between Pope and Lady Montagu. To the despair of slanderers, Dilke showed that there was little justification for belief that any event of spectacular proportions was responsible. Pope gradually grew more Tory-minded, while his former friends had turned Whig. In their letters both Pope and Lady Montagu confided to correspondents that neither knew why they did not see one another more often. Dilke says of this estrangement:

> Had Pope and Lady Mary lived at a distance--the one in London, the other in Twickenham--their acquaintance might have quietly and silently died out, as a hundred more congenial friendships die out in the everyday progress of life; but living in the same village, the estrangement required explanation, and explanation, with its exaggerations and misrepresentations, was a sure ground of quarrel.[67]

Once the estrangement had begun, matters of little importance culminated to effect a final break. On the whole, Dilke was not inclined to believe it was the fault of one more than of the other, though he spoke somewhat curtly of Pope's

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[66] Ibid., April 6, 1861, p. 461.

[67] Ibid., April 13, 1861, p. 493.

slanders against Lady Montagu.

Except for censuring Pope for his duplicity in the publication of his own correspondence, Dilke defended Pope against false charges leveled at him by earlier biographers. He sneers at Roscoe's suggestion that Pope carried on clandestine affairs with the Blount sisters; he excuses Pope from any serious breach of propriety in his conduct with Lady Montagu. His most important defense of Pope is his refutation of the charge that the poet accept a 1,000 pound bribe from the Duchess of Marlborough to suppress the "Character of Atossa," allegedly discriptive of her. The slander, perpetrated in part by Warton, was perpetuated by biographers down through Carruthers, whose Life of Pope Dilke reviewed in the Athenaeum in 1857.[68] He shows, first of all, that not until 1746 was there a bribe ever mentioned, and then only by an anonymous person serving as amanuensis to Warton's publisher:

> These verses are part of a poem entitled Characters of Women. It is generally said, the D--ss gave Mr. P. 1,000 pounds to suppress them: he took the money, yet the world sees the verses; but this is not the first instance where Mr. P.'s practical virtue has fallen very short of those pompous professions of it he makes in his writings.[69]

After dealing appropriately with the tale-bearer, Dilke abstracts the "It is said" portion to claim as Warton's

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[68] Athenaeum, October 3, 1857, pp. 1232-35.

[69] Ibid., p. 1234; Quoted by Dilke.

authority.[70] This was in 1857, and at this time Dilke could offer no final proof. He could ask only if this disreputable fellow is to be credited on his own admission of "no-authority" when the whole life of Pope "gives the lie to it."[71] However, in 1860, after reviewing his argument in 1857, Dilke advances the startling intelligence that the charge must be untrue because the "Character of Atossa" was not meant for the Duchess of Marlborough. As one of his arguments Dilke points out that the italicized portion of the first line in the following quotation offers strong evidence that the "Character of Atossa" was directed rather to the Duchess of Buckinghamshire than to the Duchess of Marlborough:

> There was another Character written of her Grace /Buckinghamshire/ by herself (with what help I know not), but she shewed it me in her blots, and pressed me, by all the adjurations of friendship, to give her my sincere opinion of it. I acted honestly and did so. She seemed to take it patiently, and upon many exceptions which I made, engaged me to take the whole, and to select out of it just as much as I judged might stand and return her the copy. I did so. Immediately she picked a quarrell with me, and we never saw each other in five or six years.[72]

Dilke produces further evidence that the "Character of

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[70] "Here is an obtuse rascal by his own confession. Pope, he tells us, it is 'said,' took a thousand pounds to suppress these verses; but since his death, I got hold of a copy, and here they are! I publish them, and my publication 'is not the first instance where Mr. Pope's practical virtue has fallen very short of his pompous professions!" (Ibid.)

[71] Ibid.

[72] Dilke, Papers, I, p. 273.

Atossa" was meant for the Duchess of Buckinghamshire rather than for the Duchess of Marlborough by showing that even after her death Pope spoke bitterly of the former; on the other hand, Pope and the latter were on friendly terms up to a year before his death. There is no record of any ill feeling between them after that.

Finally, as if further proof were needed, Dilke refers to a statement by Warburton, whom Pope assisted in the collection of materials for an edition of Pope works:

> The Duchess of Buckinghamshire would have had Mr. Pope to draw her husband's Character. But though he refused this office, yet in his Epistle on the Characters of Women, these lines,
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> > To heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store,
> > Or wanders, heav'n-directed, to the poor,
>
> --are supposed to mark her out in such a manner as not to be mistaken for another.[73]

These lines are from the "Character of Atossa"; Warburton unequivocally names their reference to be the Duchess of Buckinghamshire.

The remainder of the article is devoted to an examination of this couplet and its application to the two candidates. To the question "to which one does the couplet refer," Dilke replies that the Duchess of Buckinghamshire died a year before Pope, leaving no heirs, while the Duchess of Marlborough left at least twelve and was still alive at

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[73] Ibid., pp. 283-84.

Pope's death. Thus by showing that the "Character of Atossa" was directed not to the Duchess of Marlboro but to the Duchess of Buckinghamshire, Dilke cleared Pope from charges of indiscretion which many early nineteenth century biographers had erroneously imputed to him.

In spite of Dilke's impartiality in his treatment of the biographical facts concerning Pope, Professor George Sherburn has recently commented that Dilke's distrust of Pope's honesty in the handling of the publication of his own letters colored Dilke's whole attitude toward Pope:

> Dilke, to be sure, shows some of the bias of his century. His discovery of the Caryll correspondence and consequent discovery that Pope "cooked" some of his letters--that is, more specifically, that Pope revised letters to Caryll and printed them as letters to Addison or Wycherley--seemed a last blow to Pope's honesty and led Dilke to be dominated by an attitude of suspicion with regard not merely to Pope's self-edited letters but also to other phases of the poet's career.[74]

Undoubtedly, Professor Sherburn is correct in the first part of this passage in avowing that Dilke showed some of the bias of his century; Dilke himself acknowledged as much in one of his articles:

> The biographers seem never forearmed unless they are forewarned,--never to consider that the only account we have . . . is Pope's own,--or rather, . . . not a direct statement by Pope, but a story which the ingenious weave for themselves, by inference and from circumstances and letters, for the truth of which no man is warrant. The biographers might reply, and perhaps with equal justice, that we are too critical, too sceptical; and we acknowledge that we have seen others, and been ourselves, so

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[74]Sherburn, p. 20.

> often mystified and misled that we are suspicious in all questions relating to Pope where the evidence is merely inferential.[75]

But to the charge that the disgraceful story of the letters caused an unfair attitude in Dilke towards all Pope questions it may be asked, with Dilke, "what are the facts?" In the first place, the very admission of possible prejudice is a safeguard against it. And beyond that, with the exception of matters pertaining to the letters, Dilke is consistently defending Pope from the charges of other biographers. It is unfair to impute that Dilke was prejudiced in these "other phases" of Pope's career, as Sherburn has said. It would appear rather to be a healthy critical attitude that can defend merit and condemn duplicity according to the evidence. As a positive denial of Sherburn's too-general condemnation, Dilke himself may be quoted:

> For Pope's errors or his vices, when proved, let Pope be condemned; and he had enough to keep the dullest of mortals in countenance. Of all the current and contemporary slander which cannot be proved, let him be acquitted.[76]

Dilke knew as well as anyone the faults and virtues of Pope, and it is significant that he acquits far more often than he condemns. Professor Sherburn, nevertheless, recognizes Dilke's contribution to Pope studies. His following testimony to Dilke's accuracy and diligence with respect to Pope

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[75] Athenaeum, May 8, 1858, p. 586.

[76] Ibid., November 15, 1856, p. 1398.

studies could with equal verity be applicable to such figures as Burke, Wilkes, and Junius, about whom Dilke had written with equal candor:

> The contributions of Dilke were chiefly concerned with the authenticity of various of Pope's correspondences, though his criticisms of biographical detail evince an incisiveness that may be the ideal and the despair of any biographer. That neither Spence nor Dilke should have written a life of Pope is a major catastrophe to this field of scholarship.[77]

Professor Sherburn's high praise of Dilke as a biographical scholar is a tribute to Dilke's insistence on facts. Because he applied in his own criticism what he advised for other critics, Dilke gained a reputation for sound biographical scholarship that stands to this day.

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[77]Sherburn, p. 20.

CHAPTER VI

DILKE IN HIS AGE

Dilke's literary criticism reflects certain attitudes of the two ages in which he wrote. The trends, values, and methods of his criticism are in some ways like and in other ways different from those of other Romantic and Victorian critics. By comparing his criticism with that of several of his contemporaries or near-contemporaries--notably, Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Shelley, Hunt, Jeffrey, Ruskin, and Arnold--this study proposes to evaluate Dilke in terms of his age.

His love for scenery, ruins, and distant places, so appealing to the hearts of all Romantic poets, is evidenced in his many reviews of books on these subjects. In a review of Sir William Gell's Pompeiana: or, Observations on the Topography, Edifices, and Ornaments of Pompeii, Dilke indulges himself in several purple passages on the romantic ruins and scenery of old Pompeii.[1] He reveals his love for scenery and old places again in an original paper he published in June, 1830, "A Visit to Arqua," the burial place of Petrarch.[2] Here he describes in

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[1] Athenaeum, June 12, 1830, pp. 364-65.

[2] Ibid., p. 361.

minute detail Arqua's fields of beauty, Petrarch's house and garden, and finally, the beautiful Arqua nights. These nostalgic remains of bygone years are depicted by one who obviously relished every detail.

Dilke reveals his Romantic bias in his partiality for Romantic poets and Elizabethan dramatists. As one of the coterie of the London Magazine from 1820 to 1830, he shared their enthusiasm for Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Burns. He professed a great admiration for Shelley.[3] In defense of Keats, he challenged anyone to produce by any poet no older than twenty-two a poem superior to the "Hymn to Pan."[4] The only Romantic figure Dilke may have underestimated was his friend Charles Lamb, and even in this instance he defended Lamb from a vicious attack in the Literary Gazette.[5] Dilke's only strictures against Lamb, moreover, were relatively minor: though always a pleasant writer, he says, Lamb was not powerful, and his diction suffered from lack of color.[6] Because of Dilke's personal tastes, Another era which held his interests and imagination throughout his life was the Elizabethan Age. Excepting

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[3] Ibid., August 4, 1832, p. 502.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., July 17, 1830, p. 435-6.

[6] Ibid.

Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and one or two other of the greatest playwrights, the Continuation considers the works of all the major dramatists in that period.

Dilke is like his Romantic contemporaries in his fundamental assumptions toward literature, although he appears never to have set forth any theory of aesthetics as did Coleridge in Biographia Literaria or Shelley in Defense of Poetry. Thus, one cannot lend dignity to Dilke's native prejudices by calling them philosophical aesthetics. But that he had certain basic attitudes similar to those of his contemporaries is repeatedly evidenced in his criticism. He sided with Coleridge against too much representation of "nature" in poetry; he emphasized with Coleridge the role played by the imagination. He was convinced that moral benefits are to be derived from literature, and his criticism anticipated Shelley's Defense of Poetry. And he shared with all his contemporaries a considerable distrust for arbitrary rules. It is true that other ages were likewise concerned with such aesthetic problems as nature, imagination, and moral benefits in literature, but authors in the Romantic age stressed these elements to aid in giving that period a unique character.

The Romantics' concern over the matter of "nature" in poetry was a legacy bequeathed them by the neo-classic

age. The term had several meanings for both ages: physical nature, human nature, natural phenomena of everyday life, and natural diction. Samuel Johnson and Joshua Reynolds had decreed that strict adherence to physical nature was undesirable in art and poetry. The fiat "/the poet or artist/ does not number the streaks of the tulip"[7] represents eighteenth century aesthetics, although the veins in leaves were nonetheless counted by a minority of poets in that age. On the other hand, Johnson and Reynolds stressed a graphic fidelity to human nature, that is, the factual representation of realistic behavior in people. Applied to drama, the insistence on factual portrayal meant that the characters ought to behave as we should expect people to behave in real life.

The attitude towards nature was modified in the Romantic age. By keeping his "eye on the object" the Romantic poet discovered that he could arouse feeling and sympathy in a graphic description of physical nature. The function of "general nature" in the eighteenth century was to portray general truths rather than to excite feeling or sympathy, and thus had been unable to achieve such an immediate emotional response.

But if the Romantic poet insisted on fidelity to his

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[7]See especially Chapter X in Samuel Johnson, Rasselas.

physical environment, he tended to mitigate the importance of other aspects of "nature." Coleridge felt that just enough natural phenomenon--that is, day to day life--was necessary in drama to procure for the audience "the willing suspension of disbelief."[8] In writing serious supernatural poems, something that Johnson or Reynolds would never have done, Coleridge included just enough of "nature"--probability in real life--to render his stories poetically harmonious; just enough to prevent jarring the reader's credibility. Coleridge argued against Wordsworth's premise that the most suitable diction for poetry is the language of natural, daily intercourse.[9] Wordsworth had stated in his Preface that rustic speech was suitable for poetic diction; Coleridge answered that the other extreme, the language of Milton, for instance, was most poetic.[10]

Dilke takes a position with Coleridge in saying that poetic diction should contain some of what the eighteenth century called "grand style." His opinion that Lamb was not a powerful writer was based on his dissatisfaction with Lamb's choice of diction: "there is no blazonry in his poetical escutcheon, no pomp and majesty in his language."[11]

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[8]Samuel T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. H. Coleridge, 2 Vols. (London, 1848), II, p. 2.

[9]Ibid., pp. 41-63.

[10]Ibid., p. 41.

[11]Athenaeum, July 17, 1830, pp. 435-36.

He trusted too much to "nature in all its simplicity /of diction/."[12] In effect, Dilke believed that Lamb's diction was too prosaic, that the "natural" mode of expression was not the poetic mode.

Dilke felt, too, that the supernatural element in poetry should not be criticized because of some arbitrary rule stressing truth to "nature," that is, to the natural phenomena of everyday life. In his introduction to Dekker's works in the Continuation, Dilke defends the dramatists of the Elizabethan age in their frequent use of the supernatural:

> Without adverting to that species of supernatural agency which was then very generally believed, and which Shakespeare has employed with such powerful effect in "Macbeth," it may be observed that the translation of the "Orlando Furioso," by Sir John Harrington, and the "Fairy Queen" of Spenser, must not only have accustomed their readers to tolerate, but to be delighted with fictions of the boldest kind; and those of the enchanted lance of Bradamante, the magical ring of Angelica, the blazing shield of Rogero, and the flying horse of Astolpho are scarcely exceeded by the inexhaustible purse and wishing cap of Fortunatus. It will readily be allowed that fictions of this kind are more suitably employed in poems like those of Spenser and Ariosto than in a dramatic performance; but though Ben Jonson raised his voice against such "as made nature afraid in their plays," and the romantic taste of the age was very forcibly ridiculed by Beaumont and Fletcher, in the "Knight of the Burning Pestle," yet it will scarcely be regretted that a more strict adherence to reality did not prevail, when we recollect that it would have deprived us of such plays as "Midsummer Night's

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[12] Ibid.

Dream" and "The Tempest."[13]

The "more strict adherence to reality," which happily did not occur, hints an echo of Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief," which insisted that enough of nature be included in any representation of life for the reader to enter into the literary work or stage presentation without difficulty. The purpose of poetry, Coleridge said in 1817, was not truth but pleasure. Two years earlier Dilke had stated that poetry is embellished by other-worldliness, fantasy, and superstition, which was sufficiently truthful for the purposes of poetry. Dilke caustically observed further that "the Shakespeare of a more instructed and polished age would not have given us a magician darkening the sun at noon, the sabbath of witches, and the cauldron of incantation," or we had been deprived of many supernatural pleasures in literature.[14] Dilke and Coleridge were in agreement as to the proper place of nature in poetry. Physical nature accurately represented was a potential aid in arousing the emotions; natural diction, however, sounded too much like prose; in instances where pleasure conflicted with fidelity to the natural course of events, pleasure should take precedence.

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[13] Dilke, Continuation, III, p. 101.

[14] Ibid., I, p. xii.

Like the Romantics, Dilke placed great stress on the imagination. In his use of the term he included none of the metaphysical or aesthetic meanings that Coleridge attached to the word. The latter's division of the imagination into its primary and secondary functions was an attempt to define poetry as a creative act, which the poet must experience in order to attain greatness. On the other hand, Dilke nearly always looked upon the imagination as the device by which the audience experiences feeling for the characters or situations. However, in its effect on the audience, the imagination amounted to essentially the same thing in Coleridge and Dilke.

Coleridge's description of the method of the creative force in the secondary imagination is abstruse and involved. It dissipated, diffused, and dissolved images, dissimilar as separate entities, to recreate them into a unified whole. An unerring, intuitive "x-quantity"--Coleridge never says what it is nor how it works--selects parts of these disassociated images and fuses them together to make new intelligible and unified images. With this sort of subject matter Dilke would have nothing to do, as is evident in his purposeful neglect of Keats' theory of negative capability. But in describing what the imagination actually is and what it does, Coleridge employs rather complicated terminology to describe a relatively commonplace phenomenon. The imagination, he says, is "essentially

vital," in that the poet is by the imagination enabled to diffuse his spirit "through earth, sea, and air," to enter into and become one with whatever object he contemplates.[15] Shakespeare does not write about Hamlet, Coleridge maintains, but Shakespeare becomes Hamlet. So far as it concerns results, all this abstruse terminology amounts only to the poet's ability to change places imaginatively with someone else. We appeal essentially to the same powers when we ask another to "put yourself in my place." Dilke shares Coleridge's opinion that the imagination is essentially a vital force, although he is primarily interested in the effect of the imagination upon the audience--the reader and the listener--rather than in its potential as a creative force for the poetic faculty; nevertheless, the same powers of projection of feeling are indicated for poet and audience alike.

One of Dilke's stipulations for a good play is that it must arouse emotion. "A long, tedious business" he calls Heywood's Edward IV, whose greatest fault was that "we find so little to excite our feelings."[16] He is most enthusiastic over those plays containing a broken-hearted lover, a happy reunion, or any other situation containing a great deal of pathos. In sympathy with the so-called

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[15] Biographia Literaria, I, p. 298; II, pp. 1-25.

[16] Dilke, "The Early Drama--Thomas Heywood's Plays," Retrospective Review, XI, Part I (1825), p. 127.

School of Sensibility, Dilke agreed that the more excitation of feeling and the more tearful, the better--provided happy reunions as well as sad lovers are admitted just cause for tears. In almost every paragraph of the introductions in the Continuation Dilke made a point of alluding to the playwright's ability to engender feeling. He praised Heywood's best-known play, A Woman Killed With Kindness, for its great pathos and sensibility:

> This is the most tearful of tragedies; the most touching in story; the most pathetic in detail; it raises, in the reader's breast, "a sea of troubles", sympathy the most engrossing; a grief the most profound.[17]

The aesthetics of the eighteenth century had stressed logic, intellect, and order. The Romantic age in its dynamic, vital approach to literature put aside these requisites of a former age to emphasize emotion, pathos, and sensibility. Dilke was in this respect a man of his own age.

In his belief that projection of feeling enabled man to receive moral benefits from literature, Dilke may have anticipated Shelley, who defended poetry for its moral teaching. Both the Continuation and the article on Heywood in the Retrospective Review, in which Dilke virtually equates literature of merit with moral instruction, were published before the Defense of Poetry. Following

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[17] Ibid., pp. 154-55.

Horace, Shelley maintained that the study of literature was not only delightful, but instructive as well, if instruction may be extended to mean moral benefits to mankind; poetry, Shelley said, co-existed with whatever other arts that served to contribute to the happiness and perfection of man. Poetry was morally beneficial not only in its useful examples, but also in the study of it for its own sake:

> Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb.[18]

This power of poetry to raise the spirit of mankind above the infirmities of the flesh is made possible by the imagination's ability to project feeling:

> The great secret of morals is. . . a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person. . . . A Man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause.[19]

Dilke shared with Shelley the conviction that moral benefits are to be derived from literature. He once wrote that the great numbers of literary journals were "mighty forces" at work throughout the world for the betterment of

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[18] Percy B. Shelley, Defense of Poetry, ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith (Boston, 1921), p. 33.

[19] Ibid.

mankind: they had a "humanizing influence,"[20] that is, they planted the seeds of moral instruction everywhere. Again, Dilke praised Heywood for his refined and polished characters, who provided useful moral instruction for the reader:

> There is an inexpressible charm about those characters, a politeness founded on benevolence and the charities of life, a spirit of the good and kind which twines around our affections, which gives us an elevation above the infirmities which flesh is heir to, and identifies us with the nobleness of soul and strength of character which shed "a glory" round their heads.[21]

This spirit of the good and kind that affords not the characters themselves "an elevation above the infirmities" of life uplifts the reader and identifies him with nobleness of soul and strength of character. On another occasion Dilke alludes to Heywood's frequent error in representing unshakable, superhuman, heroic characters at the expense of humanity and useful moral instruction:

> Heywood, like many of our old dramatists, deals in the extreme of character, which frequently amounts to heroism. His heroes are of unshakable purpose, of irresistible patience; men who will stand beneath the sword suspended by a single hair; and, with the power of motion, still resolutely bide the consequence. The point of honour is discriminated with the most subtle nicety; a vow is considered as registered in heaven; it is the sentence of fate, and must be equally inexorable. The spirit, however, is frequently sacrificed to the letter, and the good and the true are disregarded, to preserve a consistency with a supposed virtue--a sort of character better calculated to supply, from the

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[20] Athenaeum, December 16, 1835, p. 968.

[21] Dilke, "Heywood," PP. 127-128.

> passionate and deep internal conflicts which it occasions, affecting subjects for the stage, than useful example or instruction for human happiness.[22]

That Dilke condemns Heywood's typed "heroes" because of their consequent lack of "useful example" indicates the stress he placed on this utilitarian value in poetry. Elsewhere he speaks of Heywood's characters "sweetness of disposition and perfection of moral character."[23] A Woman Killed with Kindness Dilke names as Heywood's best play for its intense pathos and moral instruction:

> We are overwhelmed with the emotion of the unhappy sufferers, and are carried along in the stream of distress, incapable of resistance, and unconscious of anything but the scene before us. . . . The most phlegmatic in feeling, the most obtuse in understanding, cannot remain unaffected; it must emphatically come home to men's business and bosoms.[24]

Dilke in praise of Shelley himself stated in 1832, eight years before the Defense of Poetry was published, that Shelley was one of the greatest of moral teachers:

> If not judged by creeds and conventional opinions, Shelley must be considered as a moral teacher both by precept and example. He scattered the seed of truth, so it appeared to him, everywhere, and upon all occasions, --confident that, however disregarded, however long it might lie buried, it would not perish, but spring up hereafter in the sunshine of welcome, and its golden fruitage be garnered by grateful men.[25]

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[22] Ibid., p. 128.

[23] Ibid., p. 136.

[24] Ibid., pp. 154-155.

[25] Athenaeum, August 4, 1832, p. 502.

Dilke felt that Heywood's plays and Shelley's poetry had value beyond their immediate aesthetic qualities; they had a practical and useful purpose, so to speak, in that they enabled men to harvest the "golden fruitage" of truth. While it is true that moral concern is present in literature from Homer forward, the early nineteenth century figures stressed this element as one of the distinguishing characteristics of Romanticism. This emphasis on the moral aspects of literature serves to help identify Dilke as Romantic in temperament.

A final native prejudice of Dilke's is his distrust for arbitrary rules. In articulating this predisposition, Dilke aligns himself on the side of the vast majority of his contemporaries. In some of his statements in the introductions to the Continuation Dilke frequently belittles those critics affecting to judge drama by set standards, as for example, his comment on the defiance of rules in Dr. Faustus:

> Whoever shall attempt to judge of it by dramatic rule, will find himself baffled in every attempt, and according to his humour, laugh or censure. . . . The unity of time and place are set at all defiance; four and twenty years pass in its representation; and the scene changes with as much facility from Wittenberg to Rome, as the board itself was changed which notified it to the audience.[26]

But Dilke argues first of all that for this violation of "arbitrary law" the rich vein of poetry will amply

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[26]Dilke, Continuation, I, p. 9: "A board, with the name of the place where the scene was laid, was suspended in front of the old theatres." (Dilke's note).

compensate. Furthermore, the "law" itself is unjust and would, in Dilke's opinion, be trying a man by an "ex post facto law, one that he could not have foreseen, and if he had, would probably never have acknowledged."[27] Elsewhere Dilke attacks critics who attack the old playwrights for violation of rules which they never knew, nor would ever have acknowledged. In the "General Introduction" to the Continuation Dilke states that the Elizabethan drama is superior to all others because it was a national and original drama:

> . . .the drama of that age is not only deserving consideration for its superiority over every other of our own country, but particularly so as a national and original drama, regulated by its own laws, and of course only to be estimated by them.[28]

Dilke quotes from an unknown critic commending his just observance that "there is no monopoly of poetry for certain ages and nations; and consequently that despotism in taste, by which it is attempted to make those rules universal which were at first perhaps arbitrarily established, is a pretension which ought never to be allowed."[29] Dilke takes issue with eighteenth century critics by inveighing against rules pretending to "acknowledged standards of excellence,"

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[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., p. 10; italics Dilke's.

[29]Ibid.

which curb the imagination and make of genius a craftsman instead of a creator. Thus Dilke's native prejudices concerning aspects of diction, nature, feeling, imagination, moral benefits, and arbitrary rules place him among the most articulate of the Romantics.

Dilke is in some ways similar to, and in other ways different from, the Romantics in his methods of criticism. Characteristic of the early nineteenth century's approach to dramatic criticism is the remarkable ability of critics to penetrate to the very heart of the immediate text, to discourse frequently and sometimes passionately about small sections of the play, to find volumes of meaning within a phrase, and to distinguish ably between fine points. Their eager response to sensation was easily kindled by a word, a phrase, a passage, perhaps even a scene, though seldom was this immediate reaction occasioned by such larger elements as acts or plays. Coleridge speaks often of Shakespeare, but nearly always on one phase of Shakespeare. These smaller units of interest were more conducive to intense feeling.

This Romantic enthusiasm for small, significant points occasioned extensive use of textual, impressionistic, comparative, and analytical modes of criticism, by Dilke, as well as by all the Romantic critics. Textual criticism in Dilke's age was extensive, accurate, and stimulating, but

it was not a virtue to which critics could lay sovereign claim. The great editors like Theobald and Malone had bequeathed a heritage of intelligent guesswork, penetrative analyses, and frequent and lengthy footnotes in their voluminous editions of Shakespeare. Nonetheless, Dilke and the Romantics with their predilection for sensibility and feeling perpetuated the accuracy and perhaps improved on the commentary of their predecessors.

Against these observations it must be acknowledged that of the major critics only Coleridge indulged himself to any extent in textual criticism. But the conspicuous absence of textual concern in other critics stems not so much from a lack of interest but rather from a lack of opportunity. Only Charles Lamb attempted an edition of plays wherein textual criticism was appropriate. And while Lamb praised here and there the dramatic import of scenes, he leaves little evidence of textual collation which was paramount in Dilke's critical study of Elizabethan dramas in his Continuation.

There are very few pages without some textual criticism in the six volumes of the Continuation. Picked at random from the play of Doctor Faustus, the following selection is typical of Dilke's method of textual handling; instead of

> Faust. Their conference will be a greater help to me
> Then all my labours, plod I ne'er so fast, . . .

Dilke emends as follows:

> Faust. Their conference will be a greater help
> Than all my labours, plod I ne'er so fast.[30]

Dilke then explains that the original editions read "'help to me'; but as it was unnecessary to the sense, and destructive of the metre, I struck it out."[31] He assures the reader, however, that not usually is he so free with his original text, for he invariably prefers to present the original in its corrupt form and to list variant readings in footnotes and leave the alteration to the judgment of the reader.[32] From a textual standpoint Sir Charles Dilke reports that contemporaries of Dilke considered his Continuation to represent an admirable job in editing.[33]

Owing probably to their intense appreciation of pathos, all Romantic critics frequently utilized the impressionistic method. Lamb especially loved to point out beauties in authors by telling his own reaction to a particular passage. He felt that something about Shakespeare's plays fitted them better for reading than for staging. De Quincey felt that the porter scene in Macbeth had some special significance. Both Lamb and De Quincey are first

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[30]Dilke, Continuation, I, p. 14.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Dilke, Papers, I, p. 1.

concerned with analyzing their feelings, and secondly, in giving reasons for so feeling.

A passage from Lamb illustrates this popular Romantic method. In commenting on a selection from The Revenger's Tragedy (1607) by Cyril Tourneur, Lamb writes: "The reality and life of this Dialogue passes any scenical illusion I ever felt. I never read it but my ears tingle, and I feel a hot blush spread my cheeks."[34] This impressionistic method is one of Dilke's favorite means of evaluating a play, especially in criticizing emotional scenes. In a passage from his paper on Heywood, Dilke utilizes the impressionistic method in which he pours forth phrases full of emotional words to describe feeling: "the most touching in story," "the most pathetic in detail," "the most tearful of tragedies," is this play that raises passion in the "reader's breast."[35]

Dilke is like his contemporaries in the utilization of the comparative mode. Coleridge and Lamb appear to employ this method more frequently than do other critics. In his"Characteristics of Shakespeare's Dramas" Coleridge compares certain aspects of the Greek with the Elizabethan drama. Again, he often utilizes the comparative method to demonstrate the superiority of Shakespeare:

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[34]Charles Lamb, Works, ed. E. V. Lucas, 6 Vols. (London, 1904), IV, p. 160.

[35]Dilke, "Heywood," pp. 154-55.

> In metre, B/eaumont/and F/letcher/are inferior to Shakespeare, on the one hand, as expressing the poetic part of the drama, and to Massinger, on the other, in the art of reconciling metre with the natural rhythm of conversation--in which, indeed, Massinger is unrivaled.[36]

Similarly, Lamb displays a considerable quantity of comparative criticism. The commentary in his Specimens of Dramatic Poets is frequently concerned with comparing poets, plays, scenes, or passages. The following passage attests Lamb's sensitive ear for meter, and shows him partially succeeding, where Coleridge failed, in discovering the distinguishing characteristics between the poetry of Shakespeare and that of Fletcher:

> /Fletcher's/ideas moved slow; his versification, though sweet, is tedious, it stops every moment; he lays line upon line, making up one after the other, adding image to image so deliberately that we see where they join: Shakespeare mingles every thing, he runs line into line, embarrasses sentences and metaphors; before one idea has burst its shell, another is hatched and clamorous for disclosure.[37]

Dilke uses simplified versions of this comparative method in his discussion of Marlowe, who may "claim a very proud superiority" over his predecessors.[38] Again, speaking of specific works, Dilke reminds his readers that Faustus' situation is comparable to that of Orestes if one will grant that the emotions, so intensely aroused in Faustus, have pushed

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[36]Coleridge, Essays and lectures on Shakespeare and some other old Poets and Dramatists, ed. E. Rhys (London, 1907), p. 200.

[37]Lamb, Works, p. 341.

[38]Dilke, Continuation, I, p. 2.

him to the very borders of insanity, as in the case of Orestes. He goes on to mention characters similar to Faustus in Webster's Duchess of Malfi and in Ford's Broken Heart, and points out specific differences that bring the reader to a closer understanding of Dr. Faustus' situation and character. This method Dilke employs not only for estimating the value of a writer's contribution to his age, but also for measuring even larger groups or elements or movements. In presenting his own evaluation of the poets included in the Continuation, Dilke admits that their plays are certainly inferior to those of Shakespeare; he adds, however, that Shakespeare was a prodigy in the Elizabethan age as well as in the nineteenth century. Dilke's talent for encompassing broad aspects of literature is evident in the following selection of comparative criticism:

> The time of the drama /Old Fortunatus, by Dekker/is supposed to be in the reign of Athelstan, and yet Viriatus is introduced, who was dead more than a thousand years before Athelstan was born; and Bajazet who was not born till at least four hundred years after his death. If these had been introduced by Fortune merely as shadowy figures (like the descendants of Aeneas, in the Sixth Book of Virgil, and of Bradamant in the third book of "Orlando Furioso," or as the future princes of England in "Macbeth,") as striking instances of the mutability of human affairs, much of the incongruity arising from their being made speakers would have been avoided.[39]

Thus in Dilke's capability of encompassing such a broad view of literature it is apparent that he could handle

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[39] Ibid., III, p. 114.

comparative criticism equally well with Coleridge and Lamb.

Dilke and most other Romantic critics favored the analytical method. Although this mode is probably any critic's main resource, Hazlitt seems to employ this technique more than did his contemporaries. By this method, as it came especially from the pen of Hazlitt, statements appear to be more matter-of-fact, to sound more authoritative to admit less controversy than do opinions expressed in other media of criticism. "The Character of Hamlet stands quite by itself"; "Macbeth stands in contrast throughout with Hamlet."[40] Similarly, Hazlitt complains of Marlowe's failures in Edward II:

> The management of the plot is feeble and desultory; little interest in excited in the various turns of fate; the characters are too worthless, have too little energy, and their punishment is, in general, too well deserved, to excite our commiseration.[41]

Dilke assumes the same authoritative tone in commenting on Dr. Faustus:

> . . .the inequality alwasys discoverable in the writings of that age, is still more conspicuous in this author, and perhaps most so in his "Faustus," where the buffoonery and stupid humour of the second-rate characters are constantly intruding on our notice.[42]

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[40]Coleridge, Essays, p. 156.

[41]William Hazlitt, Complete Works, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 Vols. (London, 1931), VI, p. 211.

[42]Dilke, Continuation, I, p. x.

And again, in the following selections:

> The play of "Edward the 4th" is a long and tedious business. There are one or two touching parts in those scenes in which Jane Shore is introduced, but Heywood has not made anything like what he might have done with such materials, nor, indeed, anything at all approaching to what he has himself done in other pieces--with the exception of those parts, the play is mere chronicle without poetry or dramatic situation.[43]

> "The Four Prentices of London" is a rhyming, braggart production, which is ridiculed in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Knight of the Burning Pestle." "A Maidenhead Well Lost" is not worth finding, and the "Four Ages" are as poor as the author is said to have been.[44]

Although Dilke's use of these methods--textual, impressionistic, comparative, and analytical--is in some cases a slight variation from the uses made by his contemporaries, he seems in most instances to be equally as effective as they.

Dilke was unlike his romantic contemporaries both in his neglect of philosophical criticism and in his extensive uses of the biographical and historical methods. He could plumb the depths of soul of contemporaries to illustrate with admirable insight the beauties of their poetry. Posterity has proved him almost infallible in his judgment of Keats and Shelley. His detached view of these two poets evinces his rare ability to survey the entire realm of a

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[43] Dilke, "Heywood," p. 127.

[44] Ibid.

poet's works from one height, to discard accidental, insignificant aspects, and select from those works the distilled essence of poetry:

> Shelley was a worshipper of Truth--Keats of Beauty; Shelley had the greater power--Keats the finer imagination; both were single-hearted, sincere, admirable men. . . . Shelley and Keats were equal enthusiasts--had the same hopes of the moral improvement of society--of the certain influence of knowledge--and of the ultimate triumph of truth;--and Shelley, who lived longest, carried all the generous feelings of youth into manhood. . . . Keats had neither less resolution, less hope of, or less good will towards man. Even the attacks in Blackwood's and in the Quarterly were as but a mildew upon his generous nature, injuring the leaves and blossoms, but leaving untouched the heart within, the courage to dare and to suffer. Keats (we speak of him in health and vigour,) had a resolution, not only physical but moral, greater than any man we ever knew; it was unshakeable by everything but his affections.[45]

It would be difficult to find any Romantic critic, or perhaps any critic, saying so much in so brief a space. Yet for all his range and accuracy, which is amply evidenced elsewhere, Dilke seems never to have indulged himself in one of the favorite Romantic pastimes: theorizing about literature. Wordsworth's Preface, Coleridge's Biographia Literaria and numerous other individual essays, Lamb's "Sanity of True Genius," Hazlitt's "On the Grand and Familiar Style" Hunt's "Imagination and Fancy" and "What is Poetry," Keats' "negative capability," and Shelley's Defense of Poetry are all the kind of philosophical criticism which

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[45] Athenaeum, August 4, 1832, p. 502.

Dilke avoided. It is especially odd, in view of his "disquisition" with Keats over negative capability, that Dilke does not mention this theory on the truth-beauty coalition in reference to Keats. Almost assuredly, this omission could not have been an oversight. Aside from his distrust of rules, probably Dilke's reason for refusing to comment on or advance a theory of literature as such is that any aesthetic statement would have forced him into a position, and hence, have compromised his own independence as well as that of his journal.

Dilke as a critic with Romantic tastes is almost unique in his voluminous biographical scholarship. While it is true that he did nearly all of his biographical writing in the Victorian age, his prejudices never changed. Chapter V has indicated the quality of this criticism, and it need be said here only that apparently no Romantic critic descended from the high contemplation of the good, the true, and the beautiful in poetry to consider prosaic fact indicative of the good and the bad in poets themselves.

Dilke is perhaps farthest removed from his age in the extended use he made of the historical method of criticism. He alone of his contemporaries possessed a truly encompassing view, a total-effect range, a universal aspect--in short, a historical perspective--in his criticism. He

was singularly fitted for this mode of criticism, and with the possible exception of Hazlitt, he produced more of it than any of his early contemporaries. Even Coleridge, whom we would expect to excel in this type, usually lacks the breadth manifested by Dilke. Coleridge speaks often and most accurately of individual playwrights, but usually on one aspect of that playwright at any given time: Shakespeare's judgment is at least equal to his genius, Shakespeare's always condemns vices; Ben Jonson's personae are not characters, but derangements.[46] In truth, Coleridge is best when he is discussing or discriminating between fine points:

> There are three powers:--Wit, which discovers partial likeness hidden in general diversity; subtlety, which discovers the diversity concealed in general apparent sameness;--and profundity, which discovers an essential unity under all the semblances of difference.
>
> Give to a subtle man fancy, and he is a wit; to a deep man imagination, and he is a philosopher. Add, again, pleasurable sensibility in the threefold form of sympathy with the interesting in morals, the impressive in form, and the harmonious in sound,--and you have the poet.
>
> But combine all,--wit, subtlety, and fancy, with profundity, imagination, and moral and physical susceptibility of the pleasurable,--and let the object of action be man universal; and we shall have--O, rash prophecy! say, rather, we have--a SHAKESPEARE![47]

About as near as Coleridge ever comes to comprehensive criticism is in his "Characteristics of Shakespeare's Dramas,"

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[46]Coleridge, Essays, pp. 50; 54; 178.

[47]Ibid., p. 177.

wherein he lists seven of Shakespeare's distinguishing features, some of which are certainly open to argument. Rarely does he take as broad a perspective as Dilke does in his critical evaluation of Keats and Shelley. Lamb may be credited with the application of historical criticism in his Specimens of Dramatic Poets (1808), though he penned no general introduction to his work and rarely submitted more than half a page of introduction on specific authors. Lamb demonstrated a larger perspective not in historical criticism, the natural medium for the total-effect view, but only in comparative or impressionistic criticism. Hazlitt, it is true, wrote voluminously of the Age of Shakespeare, but his altitude was not even as lofty as that of Coleridge or Lamb.

In his historical perspective Dilke's vision not only discovered the strength and weakness of individual poets, but also encompassed the causes and effects of ages. In an argument with Charles Dance, dramatic critic of the Athenaeum, Dilke reveals both his bias for the Elizabethan age and his talent for characterizing that age in few words:

> You triumph over a proved prejudice of mine because I say we never can have a drama equal to that of the Elizabethan age. But I submit that, right or wrong, the opinion rests on a much broader basis than the question of comparative genius to which you try to limit it. The drama is by me considered as the natural form through which the genius of that age made itself manifest. The genius of a succeeding age can no more surround itself by the circumstances of the age of

> Elizabeth than a river can flow upwards to the spring-head whence it bubbles forth.[48]

Charles Dance was like the majority of his more illustrious contemporaries in attempting to gauge the genius of the Elizabethan age by comparison. Dilke's historical criticism was based on a deeper, more fundamental study than his contemporaries envisioned in their comparative comment. He described the genius of that age by relating its causes.

He felt that the drama of the Elizabethan age surpassed that of any other, not only in English, but in any literature. The wholesome values and vigorous genius of the writers of that age produced a drama superior to any French attempt:

> While the dramatic writers of other nations, modelling themselves on excellence that had received the applauding testimony of ages, sunk into cold formality tricked up in stately diction and wordy sentiment, the vigorous and unrestrained genius of our own, opened a rich and unexplored mine in the depths of human passion and human feeling: the heart was the subject of their examination; . . .they removed the film that obscures our nature, and penetrated at once into the secret recesses of the bosom: thus intimate with the springs of action, they never laboured to depict the progress of the passion; they struck at once the chord which vibrated to the heart, and left the rest to imagination and feeling.[49]

Dilke attributed this excellence to the Reformation, that

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[48]Dilke, Papers, I, pp. 42-43.

[49]Dilke, Continuation, I, p. xi.

"great revolution of opinion," a time in which "all classes of society burst into the arena to contend without distinction"; whereas in the preceding chivalrous ages "literary honors, and indeed, literature itself, seem to have been held, as by prescriptive right, by the higher classes of society and the members of the religious houses."[50] The translation of the Bible, aside from its religious and moral instruction, laid open to all the essence and fountainhead of knowledge, wisdom, and poetry; the dramatic writers of that age availed themselves of its beauties. Thus, it was, Dilke contends, that the age was singularly adapted "to the full display of poetic genius."[51] This historical perspective is evident in every page of the "General Introduction" to the Continuation and in most of the succeeding introductions. Dilke rarely fails to link the man with the times. He names Marlowe the greatest English playwright before Shakespeare; and again,

> Old dramatists were generally a careless and carefree race, were seldom without the rectar of the day, "good sack wine," while there was money in the purse or encouragement in the patron.[52]

Observations like these are infrequent with Dilke's contemporaries. Even in their dramatic criticism the Romantic

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Dilke, "Heywood," p. 126.

critics rarely considered the whole play. Allardyce Nicoll, who has written the only extended comment of the Romantic attitude toward the Elizabethans, notices this tendency to dispute over fine points rather than value the whole:

> For Coleridge, the critic, Shakespeare was a pure poet and a creator of character; concerning the playwright's dramatic construction the author of Biographia Literaria is silent. Hazlitt has a somewhat clearer view of what is wanted in a drama, but even he fails; while for Lamb a play is evidently good when it possesses one or two passages of lyrical beauty.[53]

Evidence bears out the general intent of Nicoll's statement. In his most famous piece of dramatic criticism, for instance, Coleridge makes the unwarranted observation that the fifth of seven distinguishing features of Shakespeare's plays is their "independence of the interest on the story as the ground-work of the plot," and gives as his substantiating argument:

> Shakespeare never took the trouble of inventing stories. It was enough for him to select from those that had been already invented or recorded such as had one or other, or both, of two recommendations, namely, suitableness to his particular purpose, and their being parts of popular tradition,--names of which we had often heard, and of their fortunes, and as to which all we wanted was, to see the man himself. So it is just the man himself--the Lear, the Shylock, the Richard--that Shakespeare makes us for the first time acquainted with. Omit the first scene in Lear, and yet everything will remain; so the first and second scenes in The Merchant of Venice. Indeed it is universally true.[54]

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[53]Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Early Nineteenth Century Drama, 2 Vols. (Cambridge, 1930), I, p. 61.

[54]Coleridge, Essays, p. 55.

However, if one omits the first scenes in Lear and in The Merchant of Venice, and in Romeo and Juliet and in Hamlet, or in any other of the thirty-three remaining plays, modern critics will with just indignation demand the emender's scalp. It is strongly suspected that Dilke would have done likewise.

In one other aspect Dilke stands apart from his age. His basis for his critical judgments is of course colored by his romantic prejudices, but his criteria are, like his prejudices, never made explicit. Apparently he committed himself no further than by vowing that regardless of all external circumstances, he would call a good book a good book. A brief glance at the restrictions imposed on other critics who did so commit themselves will suggest that perhaps Dilke as a critic was sagacious in his refusal.

Unlike his more illustrious contemporary, Francis Jeffrey, Dilke always gave reasons for his praise or censure. Jeffrey seems never to have posited any absolute critical standards, but he was dogmatic in his approach to literature where Dilke was quite tolerant. Dilke liked George Cruikshank's Illustrations of Popular Works because of its imagination;[55] he praised Alexander Alexander's Autobiography, in spite of its lack of imagination, for its fidelity to fact.[56] Jeffrey, on the other hand,

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[55] Athenaeum, June 5, 1830, p. 348.
[56] Ibid., June 12, 1830, p. 358.

had no reasons to offer for his decisions. His criteria for judgment, if indeed he claimed to any criteria, resided in

> the taste of a few . . . persons, eminently qualified, by natural sensibility, and long experience and reflection, to percieve all beauties that really exist, as well as to settle the relative value and importance of all the different sorts of beauty.[57]

Obviously, in Jeffrey's opinion one of the few persons eminently qualified by natural sensibility and long experience and reflection was Jeffrey himself. He was dogmatic in his criticism, and Wordsworth "would never do" because Jeffrey was not kindly disposed towards mysticism.

On the other hand, Ruskin and Matthew Arnold did proclaim their criteria. In his condemnation of the pathetic fallacy, Ruskin unwittingly condemned great portions of the works of Shakespeare, including excerpts Ruskin himself had earlier selected as passages of singular beauty. John Eells in his recently published The Touchstones of Matthew Arnold has pointed out that Arnold's stipulations of "high seriousness" and "grand style" were not sufficiently definitive to serve as a rational control and were too limited to embrace all literature. Moreover, Eells observes that in these limitations Arnold fell into the very trap which he admonished others to avoid: in

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[57] Francis Jeffrey, Selections, ed. L. E. Gates (Boston, 1894), p. xiii.

illustrating his theory of touchstones, he was swayed by purely subjective preferences.[58] Perhaps not as a poet or philosopher, but as a critic Dilke could have done worse than refrain from adhering to some standard.

Dilke's influence over his contemporaries was in some instances indirect by virtue of his editorship of the Athenaeum and his close friendship with various important figures. Dilke's direct influence is indicated in Hazlitt's Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth (1820), where Hazlitt uses the same major points and the same ideas, expressed in different terms, that Dilke employed six years earlier in the Continuation in tracing causes for the greatness of the Elizabethan age. In his general introduction to the Continuation, wherein he sets forth pages of historical criticism, Dilke in two main points identifies the influences of the Reformation on the age of Elizabeth with the spread of knowledge to the middle classes and with the translation of the Bible:

> The Editor believes . . . that we are indebted . . . to the Reformation /for the greatness of the Elizabethan age/. In the chivalrous ages, that preceded that eventful period, literary honours, and, indeed, literature itself, seem to have been held, as by prescriptive right, by the higher classes of society and the members of the religious houses; but at that great revolution of opinion the barriers were broken down, and all classes of society burst into the arena to contend without distinction.[59]

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[58]John S. Eells, The Touchstones of Matthew Arnold (NewYork, 1955), pp. 202-49.

[59]Continuation, I, p. xi.

As a third main point Dilke laments the consequences of the aftermath of the Reign of Charles II on the literature of the age by pointing to the decadent French and Puritanical influences.

Hazlitt lists these same points prefacing his lectures on the Elizabethan age. Bryan W. Procter speaks of Hazlitt's preparation for these lectures:

> When he was about to write his Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth, he knew little or nothing of the dramatists of that time, with the exception of Shakespeare. He spoke to Charles Lamb, and to myself, who were supposed by many to be well acquainted with these ancient writers. I lent him about a dozen volumes, comprehending the finest of the old plays; and he then went down to Winterslow Hut, in Wiltshire, and after a stay of six weeks came back to London, fully impregnated with the subject, with his thoughts fully made up upon it, and with all his lectures written.[60]

That Dilke's six-volume Continuation was half of that "dozen volumes . . . of old plays" is manifest in Hazlitt's "General View of the Subject." On the first page Hazlitt uses terminology similar to Dilke's to praise the same honest virtues in the old dramatists:

> They had the same faults and the same excellences /as Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Jonson/; the same strength and depth and richness, the same truth of character, passion, imagination, thought and language, thrown, heaped, massed together without careful polishing or exact method, but poured out in unconcerned profusion from the lap of nature and genius in boundless and unrivalled magnificence.[61]

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[60] William Hazlitt, Complete Works, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 Vols. (London, 1931), VI, p. 385.

[61] Ibid., p. 181.

where Dilke had written:

> /Playwrights represented in the Continuation/ have many excellencies in common with those great men /Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Jonson/; the same peculiarities in their language, their manner of thinking, and their moral feeling; in brief, they are of the same school, the first and greatest of English dramatic literature.[62]

Hazlitt then offers his "causes" for the greatness of the Elizabethan age:

> The first cause I shall mention, as contributing to this general effect, was the Reformation, which had just taken place. This event gave a mighty impulse and increased activity to thought and inquiry.[63]

Dilke had said in giving the same cause for that same greatness that the Reformation occasioned a "great revolution of opinion," wherein "the barriers were broken down, and all classes of society burst into the arena to contend without distinction." Hazlitt gives nearly a page to depicting the effects of freedom from superstition and ignorance and the consequent literary flowering. Then following Dilke's second main point:

> The translation of the Bible was the chief engine in the great work. It threw open, by a secret spring, the rich treasures of religion and morality, which had been there locked up as in a shrine.[64]

Here Hazlitt lists not only the same major point, not only appropriates almost identical ideas, but also employs somewhat

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[62]Dilke, Continuation, I, p. vi.

[63]Hazlitt, Complete Works, VI, pp. 182-83.

[64]Ibid., p. 182.

the same terminology that Dilke had used in the Continuation:

> The translation of the Bible only, independently of the advantages derived by religion and pure morality, was of great and essential advantage; it opened to all the purest springs of knowledge, and wisdom, and poetry; and the dramatic writers of that age availed themselves of the advantages it held out.[65]

In a third major parallel with Dilke's Continuation, Hazlitt derides the inferior drama during the reign of Charles II. But not content with mere derision, Hazlitt lists as the causes for that degradation of drama the French and Puritanical influences--the identical sources that Dilke had argued earlier:

> The old dramatists were swallowed up in the headlong torrent of puritanic zeal which succeeded, and swept away every thing in its unsparing course, throwing up the wrecks of taste and genius at random, and at long fitful intervals, amidst the painted gew-gaws and foreign frippery of the reign of Charles II.[66]

Of the Puritanical and decadent French influences Dilke had previously written:

> /Because of Puritanical influences/ the players . . . became, in a much greater degree than usual, dependent on the protection of the great; and what congeniality could be expected between the uncontrollable wildness and unaffected simplicity of these old writers, their simple portraitures of nature and passion: and the taste of a monarch and a court accustomed to the regular and inflated drama of the French school, with its unnatural and unimpassioned beings? And without withholding a sincere tribute of admiration justly due to many of the writers of Charles the Second's reign, it

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[65]Dilke, Continuation, I, p. xii.

[66]Hazlitt, Complete Works, VI, p. 176.

> will scarcely be denied that they became of necessity the caterers to a diseased and unwholesome appetite.[67]

Hazlitt's condemnation of Puritanical influences, painted gew-gaws, and foreign frippery during the reign of Charles II echoes Dilke's lament for the "puritanical bigotry," for the "inflated drama of the French school, with its unnatural and unimpassioned beings," and for writers who "became . . . caterers to a diseased and unwholesome appetite" in the same age.

Other less conclusive parallels indicate Hazlitt's unacknowledged debt to Dilke. In affirming the superiority of Shakespeare to other writers of his age, Hazlitt remarks:

> We single out one or two striking instances /of superior genius/, say Shakespear or Lord Bacon, which we would fain treat as prodigies, and as a marked contrast to the rudeness and barbarism that surround them.[68]

In making the same point, Dilke had written:

> /These plays/ are certainly inferior to what the public might have expected from the contemporaries of Shakespeare, if it were not remembered that Shakespeare was a prodigy in his own time, as well as in ours.[69]

Further evidence of Dilke's influence is shown in Hazlitt's argument that the old dramatists suffered unjustly from lack of attention by nineteenth century readers, a

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[67] Dilke, Continuation, I, p. viii.

[68] Hazlitt, Complete Works, VI, pp. 178-79.

[69] Dilke, Continuation, I, p. vi.

neglect Hazlitt attributed to conservative professors who made Greek and Roman Classics privileged textbooks. Public opinion had therefore slighted the old dramatists. In the course of this argument he quotes Dr. Johnson:

> Dr. Johnson said of these writers generally, that 'they were sought after because they were scarce, and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed.' His decision is neither true history nor sound criticism.[70]

Dilke had earlier quoted the same passage, had registered the same objection, in making the same point:

> . . . They "are sought after because they are scarce, and would not have been scarce had they been much esteemed": but in this it must be presumed, that he rather sought to dazzle the reader with the point and brilliancy of the sentence, than to force conviction on the understanding by its truth: it presupposes (what it would be monstrous to allow) that the public opinion is always right, and always consistent.[71]

Of the many causes for the greatness of the Elizabethan age that he might have named, it is noteworthy that Hazlitt selected the three already advanced by Dilke; from the many kinds of support for these causes, it is not mere coincidence that Hazlitt's should echo those used by Dilke in the Continuation; of the many terms to define this same support for these same causes, it is evident that Hazlitt's terminology is in some cases reminiscent of Dilke's. Whatever Shakespeare may have been to others in his superiority, he was a prodigy to Dilke and Hazlitt. Wherever

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[70] Hazlitt, Complete Works, VI, p. 179.

[71] Dilke, Continuation, I, p. vii.

else Johnson was correct in his opinion of the Elizabethan age, Dilke and Hazlitt, arguing the same point, unite to declare him wrong about an innocuous opinion of a mere three lines.

Hazlitt was too clever to subject himself to charges of plagiarism; he never employed terminology similar enough to Dilke's to admit any absolute evidence. But he does use the same major points and in many cases the same ideas dressed out in different terms, and these points are too numerous and too similar to be considered only happenstance.

The extent of Hazlitt's debt to Dilke is inconsequential here. However, the fact that a critic of Hazlitt's stature concurs in Dilke's interpretation of the forces that made the age of Elizabeth great does attest the accuracy of Dilke's critical judgment. Judged on the basis of the whole of his criticism, Dilke was Romantic in temperament, versatile in method, broad in vision, penetrative in judgment, sagacious in policy, and thorough in scholarship. His real contribution lay in his talent for attaining historical perspective, and in this method he was not only among the first in its utilization in point of time, but among the most dexterous. In his prejudices, his historical perspective, and his biographical scholarship, he may be considered to represent both the Romantic and

Victorian ages. In view of his breadth, depth, and volume, he may likewise be considered, as Elizabeth Barrett and Mr. Britton attest, a critic much deserving high recognition.

CONCLUSION

Charles Wentworth Dilke, the second of five successive Dilkes to bear that name, is remembered today as an editor, as a friend to Keats, and as a critic. In each of these three disassociated areas modern scholars have accorded him just praise; but because individual scholars in their estimates consider but one or at most two of his varied achievements, Dilke's real contribution to letters has been underestimated. Born near the end of the eighteenth century, Dilke during his formative years witnessed a literary renaissance nearly comparable to that of three centuries earlier. He avowed himself a radical, a family man, and a churchman without a church; certainly, he was an independent thinker.

A congenial, admirable man, Dilke was blessed with a large number of intimate friends who respected him for his character and ability. They trusted implicitly his judgment in both personal and public affairs. The advice to "consult Dilke" appears almost to have become a by-word with a number of his friends, and the confidence bestowed upon him by the Daily News staff attests their respect for his sound judgment.

Dilke's claim to greater recognition is based on

three general phases of his literary career, the first of which is his establishment of the Athenaeum on a truly independent basis. In the history of literary journals to 1830 complete independence from either religious, political, personal, or bookseller influence had been an unattainable ideal. Magazines prior to that time had unwittingly succumbed to the wily temptations of unscrupulous booksellers or had allowed personal, religious, or political partisanship to diffuse a pallid hue of partiality over their policies; these biases invariably manifested themselves in book reviews. Dilke, to his own personal discomfort, took great pains to insure that the Athenaeum was not seduced by these insidious influences. To guard against personal influence, he delegated reviews of books to staff members not known to authors; he refused to become friends with authors and imposed upon himself a voluntary exile from society during his sixteen years of editorship. To insure against political and religious influences, he would permit no reviewer of books on these controversial issues to express an opinion on the matter of the book, merely on the manner in which it was written. Finally, he not only refused to be a party to, but waged active war against, puffery, the payment by unscrupulous booksellers for friendly reviews of their books. For the first time in the history of literary periodicals an editor proved that complete impartiality was

possible. The Athenaeum's success in its fight for independence can be measured in terms of its circulation; and Dilke boasted near the end of his career that his journal enjoyed a sale many times larger than that of any other weekly literary periodical.

A second reason for reconsideration of Dilke's stature concerns his relations with and influence over his contemporaries. He maintained close friendships with Lamb, Hunt, Reynolds, Haydon, Thackeray, the Brownings, Landor, and Cunningham. One of the three or four figures at the very center of the Keats circle, he enjoyed the company of that illustrious, alert group of literary enthusiasts. He belonged to the coterie of luminaries writing for the London Magazine. George Keats and Thomas Hood referred to him as their best friend, and a lifelong confidant was Dickens, with whom he worked in a variety of projects over the years.

Dilke's influence over his contemporaries was extensive. Thomas Hood believed that Dilke's encouragement was an invaluable aid in the completion of the Comic Annuals. Dilke's discussions with Keats on aesthetics culminated in the latter's theory of negative capability. In relinquishing to Dilke the powers of copyright over Keats' poems, George Keats insured that the decision as to who would write the life of Keats was Dilke's. For his prestige as editor of

the nation's first literary journal, his authority was considerable. Hazlitt's introduction to his lectures on Shakespeare's contemporaries shows unmistakable borrowing from Dilke's Continuation.

Finally, Dilke merits reconsideration for the quality of his criticism. Thoroughly Romantic in his tastes, Dilke accepted the general Romantic attitudes towards the various aspects of "nature." Although he viewed the function of the imagination from the standpoint of the audience, Dilke's emphasis on the vital characteristics of the imagination amounted to the same projection of feeling that Coleridge envisioned in a poet. Dilke's stress on the moral aspects in literature may have anticipated Shelley's Defense of Poetry. And sharing a universal Romantic prejudice, Dilke distrusted rules for dramatic literature.

Though Romantic in his tastes, Dilke was more versatile than his early contemporaries in his methods of criticism. He not only utilized every type of criticism known to the Romantics, but also demonstrated his dexterity with the tools of criticism by employing methods that other Romantic critics did not. It is for his magnificent ability with these other types that Dilke's reputation as a critic stands.

For a critic with Romantic tendencies, Dilke is unique in producing a voluminous quantity of scholarly

biographical writing. His eighteenth century studies included inquiries into the lives of Burke, Swift, Lady Montagu, Wilkes, Pope, and Junius. Concerning nearly all of these figures Dilke made new discoveries and settled disputed points; many modern biographers have in consequence acknowledged enthusiastically his contributions to these areas of scholarship. His respect for facts fitted him to trace the authorship of certain disputable pamphlets written by Swift. In censuring Peter Burke's and Mr. Prior's biographies of Edmund Burke for their lack of facts, Dilke searched diligently and relentlessly until he discovered concrete evidence indicative of Burke's dishonesty. Facts permitted him to prove Pope's duplicity with respect to his letters, and other facts aided Dilke in his efforts to clear Pope from slanderous charges involving his integrity as a poet and as a man. Wilkes and Lady Montagu enjoy a higher posthumous reputation because of Dilke's untiring search for facts, and many legends, false hypotheses, and unfounded rumors on the Junius controversy were dissolved into nothingness in the presence of acute and detailed accounts of Dilke's factual, biographical scholarship.

A second method utilized by Dilke, particularly fitted to his temperament and ability, was the historical mode of criticism. In this type Dilke with his breadth of vision outdistanced in penetration the efforts of his

contemporaries. He could survey an entire age from a lofty and detached position and depict the very soul of that age in a paragraph. Historical perspective is a Victorian pretension, but Dilke in 1815 was writing historical criticism comparable in quality to most of the products of the more enlightened scholarship of nearly a century later. This comprehensive criticism in no way hampered Dilke's talent to penetrate at once to the heart of a poem or play and abstract the essential qualities in their purity.

Dilke contributed no theory of aesthetics to literature as did the majority of his contemporaries. While he agreed with Coleridge about the importance of "nature" and the imagination in poetry and with Shelley about the humanizing influences in literature, Dilke's thinking was not sufficiently theoretical to fashion a system of aesthetics. Probably one reason for this neglect is that such abstruse theorizing was not commensurate with his "Godwin-Methodist" mind, as Keats put it, alluding to Dilke's preference for facts and logic over theory. Another reason may have been his unwillingness as a critic to limit himself to a single viewpoint. By proclaiming criteria, Ruskin and Arnold forced themselves into awkward acknowledgments that their own standards could not account for the popularity or greatness of Shakespeare and Chaucer. As a critic whose job it was to give a fair opinion on books released daily from

hundreds of presses, Dilke undoubtedly believed that criteria were unsuitable for impartial criticism. He committed himself only in promising to do his utmost to call a good book a good book.

Apparently for his eighteenth century criticism, Dilke has been incorrectly called conservative in his literary tastes. We do not suppose Coleridge to have had conservative leanings for writing about Shakespeare, though such a supposition is as valid in Coleridge's case as imputing to Dilke conservative tastes for writing about the eighteenth century. In his tastes Dilke was at least contemporary. And by whatever appellation is applicable to designate looking forward to a later age instead of looking backward to a former, Dilke is the opposite of conservative in his methods of criticism. Any estimate of Dilke's stature as friend, editor, and critic must consider not only his contribution to letters, but also his unique ability, by virtue of his Romantic tastes and historical perspective, to mirror the ages in which he lived.

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VITA

William Garrett was born in Mill Shoals, Illinois, on January 21, 1928. After graduating from high school, he entered the Army on September 27, 1946, and served for fifteen months with the Occupation Forces in Japan. Discharged on December 23, 1947, he matriculated at the University of Colorado the following September, where he remained for four quarters. He completed his undergraduate work at Eastern Illinois State College, receiving the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Education on August 2, 1952. After a year of secondary school teaching in Sheldon, Illinois, he accepted a position as a graduate assistant in the department of English at the University of Florida, where he received the Degree of Master of Arts in January, 1955. Since that time he has been working towards his Ph. D. Degree in English literature.

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the chairman of the candidate's supervisory committee and has been approved by all members of the committee. It was submitted to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council and was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

June 9, 1958

E. J. Byers
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Dean, Graduate School

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